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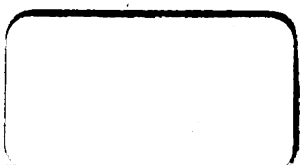
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"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

v. 54

NEW SERIES.

VOLUME XXXIV.

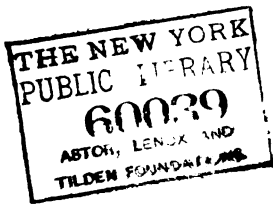
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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 805. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 1884.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXII. IN WHICH THE DIS-
INTERESTEDNESS OF DICK'S LOVE IS
DEMONSTRATED.

IT was not until the doctor came that Mrs. Tuck could be persuaded that her husband was dead. Then she retired to lie down for a few hours, and, in these first sleepless hours, her kind heart was much troubled by the thought that she had possibly hastened Mr. Tuck's death by worrying him to make his will. Not until Ida stood by her bed in the morning did the other trouble come to the top in her mind—that the will had not been signed after all.

"I didn't hear about it till now, Mrs. Tuck," said Ida, kissing her twice with unusual demonstrativeness.

"No, dear; I told them not to disturb you."

"I wasn't asleep. I wish you had sent for me if I could have been of use."

And indeed the girl had spent as sleepless and as wretched a night as Mrs. Tuck.

"You could have been of no use, dear; it was so sudden." Then, after a pause, she took Ida's hand in hers, and pressing it caressingly, said: "Ida dear, there is no will."

"You are left nothing?"

"I? Oh, I am left as well off as I should have been by will. It is you who are left nothing, dear."

"Dear Mrs. Tuck, I don't care at all; I had a great deal rather——" Then, remembering that it was not gracious now to hint at the relief she felt at the prospect of a release from her engagement,

she pulled herself up to say earnestly: "I do hope this doesn't add to your distress, Mrs. Tuck."

"I had set my heart on it, dear; but it has gone with the rest. I have been disappointed always in all I've set my heart on—except the best of all," she checked herself to say, making her meaning unmistakable by another pressure of Ida's hand and a look of love into her face. "My dear child, how ill you look!" she then exclaimed, seeing the girl's face fairly for the first time.

"I've a headache; that's all, thank you."

"Ah, it's not the head, dear, I'm afraid," she said, significantly but sympathetically.

Archie now was so hopelessly out of court, that Mrs. Tuck could afford to allude to Ida's disappointment in him without bitterness—with pity even. Besides, she had doubts, and more than doubts, of Dick's fulfilment of his engagement. A man so embarrassed and bankrupt could not, even if he would, marry a penniless girl. Mrs. Tuck, therefore, so far from being disposed to reproach him for breaking off his engagement, dreaded his reproaches for her mismanagement of the whole affair. Indeed, she felt so certain and—in her present nervous state—so fearful of such reproaches, that she avoided the subject with him as long as she could. She feared lest a discussion of it might lead to a breach with her adored nephew, at a moment when she would feel estrangement from him most poignantly.

Dick, on his side, with a becoming and unexpected delicacy, avoided it also. Indeed, he showed a most unlooked-for consideration for his aunt in her trouble. He took upon himself, not only the arrangement of the funeral, but also the settlement of a much more troublesome matter—a summons for assault and battery served

upon Mrs. Tuck by Mrs. Bompas on the very day after the death which that good lady had hastened.

The fact was, Dick was glad of any excuse for escape from the chilling shadow of death, and he therefore found it necessary for the arrangement of these two affairs, not merely to go to Ryecote, but to remain there till the morning of the funeral. In this interval, it must also be said for him, that he attended most sedulously to the settlement of the suit threatened by Mrs. Bompas. He went himself personally and daily to her lodgings, and in her invariable absence consoled with the wistful, trustful, trustful Anastasia on the hapless fate which had given her such a mother and such a lover.

As for his arrangement of the funeral, it didn't need so much time and trouble. Dick simply went to the leading undertaker in the town, and gave him a careless and sumptuous order "to do the thing properly."

The result was embarrassing. The man made his whole establishment weep more profusely than it had ever done before. He pressed into the service not only all the horses which sorrow had marked from their birth by their colour for her own, but others also of indecorous colours, which had not been taught even to prance in the exulting way thought appropriate to funerals. This, however, hardly mattered. These coursers were draped so deeply in black, that no mourner could be pained by their colour, or even by their pace, which was considerably veiled from him, and might have been—for all he could see of their legs—exultant enough for the profoundest grief. But what did matter, was the disproportion between the number of the mourners and of the mourning-coaches. There wasn't half a mourner to each coach.

Fortunately, five of Dick's creditors, having seen the notice of Mr. Tuck's death in the papers, had swooped vultuously down upon The Keep, and had lain in wait then at Kingsford, for Dick's return from Ryecote. These, Dick, after his manner, received as friends come to condole with him, and then proceeded, as a matter of course, and without the moving of a muscle in his face, to array them solemnly with his own hands in scarves, gloves, and hatbands.

"It was kind of you to come unasked, but I have asked no one," he whispered to each in turn, with tears in his voice.

The men, much impressed and relieved to find Dick acting as master of the house, were flattered by this distinction, reassured about the settlement of their claims, and not unmindful that the scarves, etc., were portable property, and that an invitation to lunch must follow.

Indeed, Dick acted the master so well, that the fulsome and officious little undertaker took him for the nephew about whom the Ryecote papers were making such a stir.

"You're the image of your poor uncle, my dear sir, and a finer corpse I've never seen—of the kind, of the kind," feeling the description too outrageous without this specific limitation.

Dick's disgust at being likened to a corpse, and that the corpse of Mr. Tuck, may be conceived. It made him very peremptory with the obsequious Mr. Powse, and so confirmed the conviction of the creditors that he was master of the house as well as of the ceremonies.

"Be good enough to see these gentlemen into the carriages, Mr. Powse," he said sharply; "one in each coach."

For there was a coach for each, and it was at once more judicious and more overpowering to keep them apart in solitary state. Thus one after the other, of the confounded creditors was led forth in solemn state and shut by himself into an immense mourning-coach. One walked as in a dream, looking from his pepper-and-salt trousers to his sable scarf, and back again, as though trying to decide which was the reality. Another charged his face with an expression of hopeless desolation, as the most fitting acknowledgment of the honour done him; while a third was in such irrepressible glee at the prospect of being paid promptly, and in full, that he was facetious with a red-nosed mute, asking him, with a wink, if the liquid business wasn't more in his line than the mute business.

"Who are those gentlemen?" asked Sir Arthur—who had returned—as he seated himself with Dick in the chief mourner's carriage.

"How should I know?" growled Dick petulantly, not yet recovered from his irritation at having been likened to Mr. Tuck's corpse.

"You seemed to know them, I thought," for Dick certainly had been effusive in his reception of them.

"I owe them money, if you mean that; but I suppose I'm not expected to know the name of everyone I owe sixpence to."

"Duns! By Jove!" exclaimed Sir Arthur in amazement and admiration.

"I didn't know what else to do either with them, or with all the coaches that swindling undertaker sent," said Dick, restored to good-humour by Sir Arthur's admiration.

Sir Arthur rubbed his hands together delightedly.

"A mourning-coach is the best place for such carrion crows—eh?" forgetting he was himself of the breed.

"Next best to a hearse," replied Dick, not forgetting it.

"Trust a hooked nose for smelling carrion a hundred miles off. I hope you told 'em to keep their shoes on and their hats off in church," cried Sir Arthur with clumsy raillery, proudly conscious of the distinction of race between himself and the other harpies. But his wit was lost upon Dick, who was plunged in thought—not of his creditors, with whom he hoped to deal without difficulty, but of Ida.

On their return from the funeral Dick asked his flattered guests to walk round the grounds with him till lunch-time. During the walk he repeatedly consulted Sir Arthur upon the improvements he meditated making, not in the grounds and gardens only, but in the house itself. He spoke of "throwing out a wing," as though it could be done with a birdlike celerity and ease, and of "bringing a frontage a foot or two farther forward," as if the improvement could be effected by a push. Upon the stables he was especially severe. They were hardly fit to house an Irish tenant, not to say a horse. He hoped, however, when next the gentlemen did him the honour to visit him, to have no cause for the shame he felt now in showing them the out-buildings.

When they came to the pigsties Dick took polite pains to explain to his Jewish friends the plan of a row of model pigsties he had seen when on a visit with the Earl of Horbury, and recommended them by all means to do, what he meant at once to do—to re-construct their pigsties upon this admirable model.

Having pressed upon them this piece of golden advice with extraordinary earnestness, Dick led the way back to the house, where he entertained them with a sumptuous luncheon, and, when it was over, took leave of them apologetically.

"There were urgent family affairs to be attended to, as they would well understand. But Sir Arthur Denzil would be

kind enough to take his place, and show them into the billiard-room if they cared to smoke."

Then Sir Arthur took them in hand, speaking to them upon the only subject they had in common—their host. He knew no man who better deserved his good fortune.

His good fortune? What was his good fortune? naturally and eagerly asked the creditors with one voice.

Sir Arthur was surprised that they hadn't heard of his engagement to Miss Luard, who came in for the property—four thousand pounds a year at least. The marriage must, of course, be postponed, but not, he thought, for many months.

Thus the duns departed rejoicing. "There was flesh on their debtor's bones yet." With his extravagant notions of improvements, etc., he would need their help in running through four thousand pounds a year at the pace he contemplated.

Dick having thus got his duns off his hands, joined Mrs. Tuck, and candidly explained to her their attendance as mourners. Poor Mrs. Tuck was too deeply distressed and unnerved to smile, for now the dreaded moment of Dick's reproaches was upon her.

"I did what I could, Dick," she said deprecatingly. "But nothing would induce him to make a will till that woman horrified him into it—too late."

"Of course you did what you could, my dear aunt," he answered cheerily. "It can't be helped; and it couldn't have been helped either."

Great were his aunt's relief and surprise at being thus cheerfully exonerated; and great, too, was her admiration of Dick's magnanimity.

"I've been more unhappy about it than I can say, Dick; and it's the greatest comfort to me to know that you don't think me to blame."

"How could I, aunt? I cannot thank you enough for doing all you did."

"Ah, Dick, I'm afraid I've only deepened your difficulties. But if, out of my small means, I can help you at all——" she began impulsively, eager to make an adequate response to his generosity.

"Nonsense, my dear aunt; you've little enough left for yourself. I must get white-washed and start afresh, that's all. Do you think Ida will mind?" anxiously.

"Will mind being left nothing, do you mean?"

"Oh no; she's not the kind of girl to

care much about that. Will she mind my being made a bankrupt, I mean?"

"She'll be very sorry, of course."

"It won't affect our engagement?" hesitatingly, yet eagerly.

"Your engagement!" cried his aunt, more and more amazed. "But what have you to live on?"

"I can get an adjutantcy, or some appointment of that kind, through Lord Dewhurst. He has more than once suggested something of the sort to me."

"I'm afraid, Dick——"

"Aunt, don't ask me to give up Ida—I cannot do it. I can resign myself to the loss of everything else, but not of her."

This, Dick! What a depth of devotion lay unsuspected beneath this cynical surface!

"My dear Dick, you surprise me. I never thought you cared so much for her."

"I didn't know myself how much I cared for her till I feared to lose her. Have I lost her, aunt?"

"Why, you don't suppose, Dick, that she'll give you up because she finds that you loved her for herself alone?"

"I don't suppose she thinks about money one way or the other. It isn't that. She wouldn't shrink from poverty, I know; but she would from disgrace; and she might think bankruptcy, even in my circumstances, a disgrace."

"Pooh! she knows no more about such things than a baby. If she believes in you, she'll believe nothing to your discredit; you may be sure of that."

"If I was sure she believed in me!"

"She'll not believe the less in you when she knows that it was only the fear of losing her made you care about the loss of her fortune."

There was silence for a moment or two, broken then by Dick:

"I wish, aunt, you would put me out of pain about this. I can't speak on the subject so soon after Mr. Tuck's death, and yet I can't bear the suspense."

Mrs. Tuck could hardly believe her ears, so strange and strong sounded such language from the usually impassive Dick. It was plain that his was one of those natures whose stillness was due to their depths. Only at rare moments and through a great agitation were those depths disclosed.

So thought Mrs. Tuck as she gazed, amazed and admiring, at her nephew.

"My dear Dick, you might be asking

me to announce to her that the change in her circumstances compelled you to break off the engagement!"

Indeed, this was the mission on which his aunt fully expected to be sent only a few minutes ago.

"It would be the more welcome announcement to her, perhaps," despondently.

"Why, what has come over you, Dick?" cried his aunt, in spite of herself. "You used not to be so diffident."

"Well, aunt, to tell you the truth, I suspect that this cousin has displaced me—or rather, perhaps, that I have never displaced him—in her affections. He is not the less formidable now as the heir."

"He is a great deal less formidable as the heir. How you could know Ida so long, and love her so well, and yet so utterly misunderstand her, I can't conceive. Even suppose this cousin of hers hadn't made himself infamous, do you think such a girl as Ida more likely to prefer him to you now because he is rich and you are poor?"

"I think riches will make a difference, not in her, but in him, aunt. They will give him the courage to propose; and if she prefers him, she will accept him, in spite of his riches."

"Prefer him, after this abominable scandal! Prefer a man who comes forward to say, 'Now that I'm rich you'll be glad to have me,' to a man who says to her, 'When you were rich I hardly dared show my love, because it might be thought interested; but now that you are poor, I need no longer repress or disguise the depth of my devotion to you through fear of misconstruction.'"

It will be seen that Mrs. Tuck was explaining to herself, and rehearsing, the explanation she meant to make to Ida of the contrast between Dick's former apathy and present fervour.

"I couldn't help feeling a little like a fortune-hunter," said Dick, taking the cue, "with all those confounded duns at my heels and at my throat. However, I hope to have done with them soon, once for all, if Ida doesn't mind my being bankrupt."

"I suppose you couldn't plead privilege, as an Irishman, and have your debts paid out of the Funds?" said Mrs. Tuck bitterly, being an Irish Tory.

"It applies only to tenants," grumbled Dick. "If a fellow's only two years in arrears with his landlord, he gets relief and release; but a man may be ten years

in arrear with his tailor" (Dick's own case), "and no one seems to think it a hardship."

"Except the tailor, perhaps," laughed Mrs. Tuck.

HOLY WELLS.

AKIN to the breathless interest with which children are wont to gather round some aged friend who can tell them endless stories of all that befell in those far distant days when father and mother were young, is the fascination with which we, children of older years, seek to gather together traces which may help us to form some idea of the surroundings and motives which influenced our own ancestors in far remote ages.

Many such points of interest cluster around our British wells—those unflinching springs of living waters which, from earliest ages to the present day, have yielded pure, refreshing draughts to successive generations, and so have naturally become centres for many customs born of piety or superstition. From the southernmost shores of Cornwall to the remotest of our western isles, we find such wells still retaining a certain hold on the reverence of the people. Even lone St. Kilda owns three sacred wells, all of which were—certainly till very recent years—honoured with votive offerings of rags, shells, and pebbles; and one of these was reputed to cure deafness.

Almost each of these Hebridean isles has its holy well, dedicated to some very local saint, supposed to be Christian, but more often suggesting plainly that the Christian name is but an adaptation of some earlier pagan dedication. Such are the various wells and streams bearing such names as Tabir-na-Annait, or the Well of Neith, on the little isle of Calligray—Neith or Annait being simply the name of the Celtic goddess of waters. Thus, too, the various wells dedicated to St. Malruba, or Mourie, whose worship was accompanied by exceedingly pagan sacrifices of bulls, with oblations of milk, assuredly suggest pre-Christian days, and it is probable that the same Mourie—"saint or demon," as he is called in the quaint ordinances of the Presbytery in the seventeenth century—gave his name to Tober Mory, the chief town of the Isle of Mull, though, according to modern interpretation, it signifies the Well of Mary, and is accounted most

Christian. Yet there is little doubt that the early Christian teachers wisely appropriated a much earlier popular veneration when they here built a chapel to the Blessed Virgin, and consecrated the well in her honour. I do not know whether this well is still treated with especial honour, but I think it probable that were we to visit it before dawn on the 1st of May—probably reckoned old style—we might see a good many folk, young and old, making their way to drink its waters on this, the old spring festival of their ancestors.

Such is certainly the case at many of the old holy wells in all parts of the country, as, for instance, St. Mary's Well at Culloden, near Inverness; St. Mary's Well at Orton, on Spey-side; St. Mungo's Well, in Huntley; St. Cecilia's Well, near Netherdale, in Aberdeenshire; St. Fergon's Well, near Inverlochry; the Wallack Well, and the Corsmall Well at Glass, in Banffshire; St. Colman's Well, in the parish of Kiltarn in Ross-shire; and a host of others, at all of which sturdy Scotch peasants—strong in their hatred of whatever they suppose to savour of Romish superstition—keep up the old original May morning pilgrimage as carefully as do their Celtic brethren in Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany, in all of which the old well worship survives in many places. The correct thing was to walk thrice round the well, then reverently drink of its healing waters, casting in a suitable offering of money, or, if the pilgrimage was made on behalf of a sick person, some portion of his or her dress was left tied to the nearest bush. In these irreverent times, the offerings are of the most meagre sort—sometimes only a crooked pin, a button, or a bawbee.

The wells are now chiefly attractive to young folk, who look forward to this play on the sweet spring morning; but some still come in sober earnest, and bring their sick children, that they may taste the mystic waters, and so be healed of their disease. From St. Mungo's Well, at Huntley, the people carry away bottles of water as a charm against the fairies, who are supposed to hold their revels at the Elfin Croft close by. The Greuze Well, near Dunkeld, is still in much repute for the healing of the sick, as may be judged from the number of rags and scraps of their clothes which are left hanging on bushes and heathery tufts, as a reminder to the spirit of the well—just the very same

custom as I have seen practised at wells, and on mountain passes, and mountain summits, in Ceylon, in the Himalayas, and other remote corners of the world. The progress of the schoolmaster tends to make the people ashamed of seeming to retain any faith in such old customs; nevertheless some undoubtedly still cling to them, and it is not many years since we noticed a girl hiding the cap of a sick baby under a stone at a well on Spey-side. She evidently shrank from observation, but farther in the Highlands of Badenoch there is no such shame, and there are wells for heartache and wells for toothache, and there is no fear lest the guardian spirit should be robbed of the offerings presented by the suppliant, inasmuch as any such sacrilegious act would cause the robber to be afflicted with the particular form of suffering from which the pious donor had been relieved.

Speaking of such holy wells, I may note incidentally that a faith in their virtue is evidently still rife in one great branch of the Christian Church, witness the many thousand reverent pilgrims, mustering an average of upwards of sixty thousand, who annually flock to the Alps of Dauphiny to worship at the shrine of Notre Dame de la Salette beside the Holy Well, said to have sprung from the tears of the Blessed Virgin on the occasion of her miraculous apparition about twenty years ago. It matters little that the story of the pretended miracle was tried in a court of law, and proved to be a glaring imposture. The fame of the Holy Well still waxes greater and greater.

Nor need we look across the Channel for proof that holy wells are still held in reverence. That many of our own countrymen look on prayers offered at special shrines as specially efficacious is evident from the number of devout Welsh Roman Catholics of the upper class, who, on the 27th of July, 1882, went on a pilgrimage to St. Winifred's Well at Holywell to offer prayers for the restoration to health of the infant son of the Duke of Norfolk. The pilgrimage was conducted by the Very Rev. Canon Monghan, and prayers were said at the chapel at Holywell, and also at St. Winifred's Well itself.

Of the many wells held in reverence by our ancestors, none probably has more fully sustained its old reputation than this, which has given its name to the town of Holywell. According to the legend, its waters gushed up within the church of St.

Beuno, at the spot where the head of the holy St. Winifred rested, when, having been cut off by Prince Caradoc, it rolled on till it entered the consecrated building. This miraculous fountain of course became a noted place of pilgrimage. William the Conqueror, Henry the Second, Edward the First, and James the Second, were among the sovereigns who came here to seek pardon for divers sins, and doughty warriors were oftentimes to be seen standing for hours in the well, with only their heads above water, absorbed in fervent prayer and craving the intercession of St. Winifred. Of one brave knight it is recorded that in the earnestness of his devotion he forgot all prudence, and stayed in the chilling water till he was paralysed. His last audible words were "Sancta Winifreda ora pro me," after which he never spoke more.

Cold as the water is, it never freezes, and the flow is always the same. It is said to be the most copious spring in Britain, yielding twenty-one tons of water per minute. This well is the property of the Duke of Westminster, who, in 1876, granted to the Corporation of Holywell a lease of the well for a thousand years, at a rental of one sovereign per annum. A recent visitor to the well took note of some of the votive offerings which had been deposited by grateful patients, and which included thirty-nine crutches, six hand-sticks, a pair of boots, and a hand-bearse.

So early as A.D. 452, the council at Arles decreed that "if in any diocese, any infidel either lighted torches, or worshipped trees, fountains, or stones, he should be found guilty of sacrilege." Evidently the fiat availed nothing, for successive councils again and again repeated the same warning. King Edgar and Canute the Great forbade the barbarous adoration of the sun and moon, fire and fountains, stones and trees. In A.D. 1102, St. Anselm issued commands in London forbidding well-worship, and so late as the seventeenth century, when special efforts were made to extinguish all manner of old heathen superstitions, such as "spells with trees and with stones," an order was issued by the Privy Council expressly with a view to checking well-worship, appointing commissioners to wait at Christ's Well in Menteith on the 1st of May, and seize all who might assemble at the spring, and imprison them in Doune Castle. Yet notwithstanding all these endeavours to stamp out these old paganisms, we find them still lingering

amongst us, and sorely we should regret to see such interesting and innocent survivals swept away.

For instance, what a singular link to prehistoric times are the ceremonies observed—at all events till very recently—at Tullie Beltane, where there are two Druidic circles and a holy well. We may remark that the very name Beltane—Beil-teine—is the old Highland name for the spring festival, and Tulach-Beil-teine means the knoll of the fire of Baal. The regular custom was for the people to meet at the Druidic circles on May morning, and march nine times in procession round the lesser temple, and then nine times round the well.

Here we have practically the same ceremony as is observed at sacred wells in Brittany, as, for instance, at that of St. Anne of Auray, where the worshippers, after making their confession in due form within the church, come forth and walk thrice round the well, and then return to their devotions in the church. From the time of Charlemagne, successive edicts have striven to put down well-worship in France with as little success as in our own land, so the Church deemed it expedient to accept the inevitable, and turned the Pagan custom to Christian use.

In Cornwall there are certain wells to which the people resort, not on May Day, but on the first Sunday in May, bringing sickly children to benefit by the healing waters. Such are St. Madron's Well, and St. Nunn's Well in Pelynt, and to this day, the Cornish peasant casts in pebbles or bent pins, and watches their course to learn what may be in store for him and his, very much in the same way as, in the days of Cæsar, the Druids foretold the future by watching the bubbles that rose in these clear waters as they dropped pebbles therein.

To some of the Cornish wells the people make pilgrimage on the first three Wednesdays in May; as, for instance, St. Euny's Well—a clear spring at the foot of a hill called Carn Brea (i.e. the brae of the Carn Fires). Dr. O'Connor mentions having asked a very old man what possible advantage he expected from frequenting such wells as were situated close to old blasted oaks or to some upright, unhewn stone, and what was the meaning of sticking rags on the branches of such trees and spitting on them? His answer, and that of other old men, was, that their ancestors always did it; that it was a preservative against

Gaesa-Draoidaot—i.e. the sorceries of the Druids; that their cattle were thereby preserved from infectious diseases; and that the fairies were likewise pleased by this delicate attention.

Some of these Cornish wells are deemed as efficacious for the cure of insanity as those in our own Highlands. Thus, at St. Nunn's, in the parish of Altermun, any unhappy maniac was tossed headlong into the deep pool, and drawn to and fro in the water, backwards and forwards, till he was quite exhausted—a process which was called bousseing or bathing. After this the patient was carried to church, and masses were sung over him. This process was repeated again and again till his feverish lunacy was chilled, either by death or recovery.

Precisely similar was the treatment of lunatics at St. Fillan's Well in Strath Earn in Perthshire, where, till within a very few years, such luckless sufferers received very rough handling. They were thrown from a high rock down into the well, and then, having been led round the chapel, they were locked up for the night in the ruins, being tied securely to an upright stone pillar, which was believed to be an object of far more ancient veneration than the church within which it stood. An average of two hundred patients were annually brought to this well, where "On the witch-elm that shades St. Fillan's spring," were hung the gay rags and scraps of ribbon, wherein the saint was supposed to take delight.

In Wales, the waters of Blandegla were equally famed for the cure of the same mysterious affliction. Here, too, the unhappy patient was thrown into the well and was then left bound for the night in the church, under the communion-table. In this case an offering of poultry was essential. If the patient were a woman, a hen was imprisoned with her; in the case of a man, the victim was a cock, into whom, doubtless, the demon of insanity passed.

On the other hand, some wells possess the awful property of making all who taste their waters mad. Such is the evil fame of the Borgia Well at Cambuslang, near Glasgow. The danger is supposed to lie in a weed which grows in and about the well. Hence the local saying:

A drink of the Borgia, a bite of the weed,
Sets a' the Cam'lang folk wrang in the head.

There are other wells which lend their magic powers to evil. Thus in Denbighshire there is one dedicated to St. Elian,

whence the parish derives its name of Lanelian. Here any malicious person having a spite against another, has only to take a smooth pebble and thereon mark the initials of his victim. Muttering a curse, he drops the pebble into the well, adding a pin as a trifling bribe to St. Eilian, who is expected to work mischief in consequence. Occasionally the person cursed, hears some hint of what has been done, and falls sick through fear. Then the well is dredged, and if the pebble can be recovered, the evil is annulled.

Another Welsh well of better repute is that of St. Tegla near Ruthin, in which epileptic patients are taken to bathe after sunset, after which they must each cast a silver coin into the water, and walking thrice round the well, must thrice repeat the Lord's Prayer. According as the patient is male or female, a cock or a hen is then carried round the well, and then round the neighbouring church, which the patient then enters, and having again repeated the prayer, must creep under the altar and there remain till sunrise, when he may depart, having offered a second silver coin. The fowl is left to die in the church as a substitute for the human sufferer.

Of the many Irish wells still in high repute, I may mention the holy well of Tubber Quan near Carrick-on-Suir, where the faithful are wont to resort on the last three Sundays in June, to pray to St. Quan and St. Brogaum, who, if inclined to grant the petitions offered, appear to their worshippers in the form of two wondrously fair trout. The pilgrims undergo divers penances, and finally go thrice round a neighbouring tree on their bare knees; after which, each cuts off a lock of his own hair, and ties it to one of the branches as a charm against headaches. The tree, thus fringed with innumerable locks of human hair of every colour, is a curious object, and is held in the deepest veneration.

At Aghada, in County Cork, there is an oracular well, dedicated to St. John, which, like St. Oswald's Well, and Holywell Dale, in North Lincolnshire, reveals whether an illness will end fatally or not. The friends of the sick man ascertain whether he will or will not recover (at any rate they used to do so) by dipping his shirt in the water, and noticing whether it sank or floated. In either case a strip was torn from the garment, and hung up on the nearest bush, as an acknowledgment for the information thus vouchsafed.

It would be easy to multiply such proofs of the survival of the ancient worship of the goddess of waters by our pagan ancestors. In these prosaic days, such traces of a long-forgotten past have a charm akin to that of the rare visits of the now well-nigh extinct wild birds or animals which haunted British forests in bygone ages, but which to future generations will be known only by tradition.

A CANOE HOLIDAY IN JAPAN.

WE lived an almost amphibious life during the pleasant latter summer and early autumn months, away in the distant European settlement at Yokohama, in Japan. There were cricketers and lawn-tennis players amongst us, but almost every man who could afford it, kept his canoe, or belonged to the rowing club, and whenever he could escape from consular court, office, or store, was afloat in one way or another.

We made canoes and their management a study, and there would be as much excitement in the boat-house of an evening over a new rig, or a new dodge for facilitating manœuvring, or for saving labour, as if the welfare of the settlement depended upon it. Some of us, of course, were "duffers," by which term was meant not only men without any previous experience of canoeing in any shape, but also those whose labours had been confined to river or lake work; but, as everyone could swim, the presence of a "duffer" or two added an element of fun to our expeditions. Upon a summer's evening it was no uncommon sight for half-a-dozen of us to put off, especially if the water was roughish, clad in the slightest attire compatible with decency, paddle out a few yards, jump overboard, and practise the best method of getting in again without capsizing our craft. The principal feature of the annual regatta, next to the international four-oared race between English, Scotch, and Americans, was a canoe race, of which the conditions were: to paddle a quarter of a mile, jump overboard, tug or push the canoes a hundred yards swimming, jump in again, and sail home, so that we attained a certain excellence in the art of canoe manipulation, which considerably reduced the risks we ran when we made long cruises across the squall-swept Mississippi Bay.

Let us accompany the Yokohama Canoe Club upon one of its autumn cruises.

It is an exquisite morning in early October. The sky is of a deep blue; the sun beats strongly down, although it is barely nine o'clock, yet tempered by a gentle breeze which lifts the waves in lazy ripples against the landing-stage of the boat-house, and, perhaps, upon the other side of Mandarin Bluff imparts a livelier motion to the water than the two duffers of our party, who are about to make their first genuine cruise, imagine. There are some twelve of us assembled, clad in the thinnest of zephyr jerseys, white trousers cut away at the knee, and mushroom-shaped sun-hats, for; although it is deliciously cool work here, paddling about on the sloppy boards with bare feet; in an hour's time, when we get out into the open, we shall bless the inventor of sun-hats, and whistle loudly for the smallest breeze to fan our burning cheeks. One of the duffers has brought a light overcoat, which he is stowing away on the seat of his craft. The commodore, a gaunt Scot, nudges the "vice," and the pair indulge in a silent giggle at the duffer's expense.

The finishing touches having been given, running gear seen to work smoothly, rudders made fast, and each man's contribution to the general tiffin stowed away in the hole for'ard termed by courtesy the foc'sle, the commodore gives the word, and we prepare to start. There are all sorts of canoes here—Nautiluses, Argonauts, Rob Roys, Royal Clyde, Royal Liverpool, Americans from Wisconsin, self-constructed canoes, native-built canoes, whether Chinese or Japanese. Canoes with single masts, canoes with two masts, even one with three masts; lateen sails, leg-of-mutton sails, square sails; canoes full of ingenious devices, canoes remarkable for nothing but bare simplicity; ugly canoes, graceful canoes, tubs and feather-weights. Each man indulges his own fancy and taste, without any rule except that he must have a distinguishing flag at the masthead.

Just as we are on the point of shoving off, someone discovers that the doctor is absent. Now a cruise without the doctor would be robbed of half its fun and enjoyment, for he is as well-known a character as any in Yokohama; a rotund, jolly-faced old Etonian, famous for his resemblance to the Duke of Buckingham as depicted by Dryden in *Absalom* and *Achitophel*:

Was everything by starts and nothing long.

Now absorbed in training ponies for the races, and bringing his thirteen stone of

flesh down to jockey weight; now an enthusiastic walker; now with canoe on the brain; next week absorbed in an entirely different hobby. There is a general feeling of disappointment at this discovery, for it has been no secret that, for some time past, the doctor has been preparing a surprise on the sly for Yokohama in the shape of a canoe constructed from his own plans, and under his personal supervision, which is simply to knock every other canoe in the place out of competition.

But the momentary pang is changed for a wild cry of delight and amusement, as the well-known form appears seated in a huge craft which is quite three times as big as any other canoe on the water, and from its resemblance rather to a fishing-smack than to a canoe is immediately hailed as *The Tub*, although the owner explains that it has just been christened the *Sky Rocket*.

For some moments our efforts to start are paralysed by the immoderate laughter consequent upon the appearance of this *Triton* among the minnows; but time is slipping on, and we want to get to our destination upon the opposite shore of Mississippi Bay before the sun gains his full strength, so the commodore gives the word, and off we paddle, for there is not enough breeze to warrant our setting sail.

Away we go in an irregular procession, along by the Bund Wall, wherefrom a few British marines give us a cheer; past the Creek Mouth, the French Hospital, the Pacific Mail Wharf, the picturesque bluff dotted with bungalows, until we arrive at the shaggy, wooded promontory known as Mandarin Bluff.

"Look out, you fellows, to make sail!" sings out the commodore to the duffers. As we round the bluff we feel the fresh breeze sweeping in from the Bay of Yedo; there is a general shipping of paddles, and at another shout from the commodore the bare masts are clothed with glittering white raiment, and the canoes seem to take a new lease of life.

"This is easy work," says duffer number one to duffer number two; "I thought there was going to be some fun and excitement." We are skirting the fishing-village of Homoko, of which the picturesque brown-thatched cottages, and the urchins sprawling on the white sand amidst heaps of cordage and timber, are plainly visible to our right. These words have scarcely left the duffer's lips, when he stops short, his

canoe gently cants over, and he is deposited head over heels in about a foot of water. In the supreme enjoyment of a fellow-creature's distress, duffer number two pays no attention to his own steering, and follows suit.

The fact is that the shore just here runs out almost level for nearly a mile. Our commodore knows this, as do all the old hands, but he prefers to let duffers "gang their ain gait," and learn a profitable lesson thereby.

"Take in your sail!" he roars. It's all very well to sing out "Take in your sail," think the submerged duffers, but it is another thing to do it, with your legs entangled in the gear of the mast and the tiller-ropes wound tightly round your arms, your mast and sail under water, your sun-hat floating off in one direction and your paddle in another.

However, after much splashing, and groping, and ill-use of the Queen's English, the masts are unshipped, the canoes floated and baled out, the flotsam and jetsam gathered together, and the duffers get under weigh again.

"I vote we stick to Mac," says one duffer to the other.

"Stick to Mac!" retorts the other; "that sounds very good advice, but for us to stick to a fellow who handles his craft like a pony, and who's all over the shop just when and where he likes, is another thing. You can try if you like, but I shall go straight ahead, and take my chance."

It is glorious work this, skimming along before this fresh breeze, now riding on the crest of a dark-blue wave, now darting like an arrow down the valley on the other side of it; the sail bulging out like a balloon and protecting us from the sun rays, which are now striking down almost perpendicularly. There is no danger out here, and it is plain-sailing, so we light our pipes, lean back contentedly on our seats, and would not exchange positions with the poor folk grilling in the settlement for something. But the feeling of swift motion and complete independence does not entirely fill the cup of our enjoyment. We get such a view from our position as cannot be obtained from any point on shore.

Far away on our right hand the blue shore trends away into glimmering indistinctness, but the air is so clear that on the nearest point, some three miles away, we can make out here and there amidst the dense wood, the red roof of a rustic shrine

and the brown cluster of a village. Beyond all rises the pure white cone of the Sacred Mountain, like some grand, sublime, solitary monarch; so clear that it seems to be carved in marble against the deep-blue sky behind, with no mountains around it to detract from its graceful height. What wonder that every son of Nippon, from Hakodadi to Nagasaki, regards it as his own personal property—carves it, paints it, worships it, sings its praises, extols it as the wonder of the world, calls it by a hundred endearing epithets, and until of recent years, deemed it so sacred as not to be polluted by the presence of women, much less of foreigners. It is the first object that greets the eye of the European on his way to the land of his pleasant exile, and the last that lingers to remind him of it on his homeward journey.

Straight ahead of us is the irregular picturesque outline of the coast to which we are bound, a land rich in pleasant villages hidden away amidst wooded hills and fertile valleys, in quaint old temples, in the undisturbed romance of long ages. To the left glitters the bay, beyond which are faintly visible the mountains of the mysterious province of Sagami.

Another half-hour's sailing brings us within a quarter of a mile of land, and the commodore sings out: "Now for a race in! First man has the first pull of beer!" Sheets are tautened, odd extra sails of all shapes and sizes are clapped on, and the frail craft literally leap over the waves, the commodore leading, and The Tub close behind, the duffers a long way astern, one paddling and the other tacking all over the place. We all struggle in somehow; the canoes ground on the firm white sand, are hauled up high and dry, and the commodore absorbs the prize beer. Let us look round.

It is indeed a fairylike spot—a small track of sandy beach between two cliffs covered with dense foliage, amidst which glisten the giant camellia, the blood-red azalea, the rhododendron, the purple iris, the yellow "icho," and the hundred other gaudy blossoms which make the flora of Japan perhaps the richest in the world.

The foliage—dark pine and fairy bamboo for the greater part—descends to the water, wherein it is faithfully and clearly reflected as in a picture. Amidst a break in the darkness dashes a cascade of fresh cold spring-water on to the beach, and its pleasant sound mingles harmoniously with the chatter and chirping of the birds,

disturbed by the unusual invasion of strangers.

In front of us is the temple, a brown-timbered, brown-thatched, tumble-down old place, erected in years long gone by in honour of Ben-Zaiten, or Benten, the Goddess of the Sea, approached by a flight of moss-grown steps, at the foot of which are two curiously-carved stone lanterns, and the inevitable stone "torii," or bird-rest of the Buddhists. Far away behind stretch woods, and a village is said to be somewhere near, but as yet its inhabitants have not turned out to examine us.

The old priest, upon whose solitary life here the occasional visits of foreigners break like those of angels, greets us at the foot of the steps, salaaming and smiling as if he were wound up by clock-work. He is filthily dirty and very ugly, but he is interesting as being one of the few depositaries near Yokohama of the genuine old Japanese folk-lore and legends. He was here when Yokohama was but a straggling fisher-village; he can talk of the old days when the cavalades of the great lords used to swagger in all their pomp and pride along the Tocaïdo, and everyone was obliged to make obeisance under penalty of receiving a slashing cut from the Muramasa blade of a retainer; when there were no foreigners in the land but a few wretched Dutchmen cooped up on the island of Desima near Nagasaki.

When the first exploring party of Europeans landed at Tomioka—such is the name of this bit of beach—the poor old fellow fled into the woods, for the popular creed then was that foreigners made their ordinary meals off priests; but further visits restored his confidence, and he not only finds that the "Tojin Baka"—beasts of invaders—are very pleasant and harmless, but that their visits are a considerable source of revenue to him, and a vast saving in larder expenses, as they invariably bring more food with them than they can possibly eat.

It is too hot in the open for tiffin, so the contents of the various "foc'sles" are transported to the temple, the mats of which are very soon littered with cold joints, cold pies, tins of preserved soup and meat, piles of bread, pots of jam, and a goodly array of bottles containing British beer and strong waters.

Then with one accord we make a rush for the beach, divest ourselves of all our clothing but our sun-hats, and amidst the wondering exclamations of a small crowd

of natives who are astonished at the whiteness of our skins, plunge into the deep, cool, blue waters for a refreshing swim. This is delicious, and only the cravings of hunger induce us to leave the water and sit on the sand to dry ourselves in the sun. Then we squat in a circle round the viands, which are heaped together in a common banquet, the old priest dances about opening bottles as fast as he can, and we fall to.

There is not much talking at first, the business in hand is far too serious, and the old priest probably ceases to wonder that Englishmen are physically so superior to his own countrymen when he notes the amount of solid food which we twelve men contrive to put away in the course of half an hour. When the first edge is taken off his appetite, the doctor proceeds to explain to us the secrets of The Tub, and is not in the smallest degree disconcerted by our constant explosions of irreverent laughter at his comic gravity and earnestness. In fact, he says that the present Sky Rocket is nothing to the one which he has upon the stocks of his mind's eye.

Then, the repast finished, and the old priest seated in a corner in front of the remains of a round of beef, half a pigeon-pie, a loaf or two of bread, and an array of bottles in various stages of partial consumption, we abandon ourselves to the pleasures of tobacco. No man who has ever made one of those cruises with the Yokohama Canoe Club can ever forget these ecstatic moments of post-prandial rest. The soft mats, the music of the breeze through the bits of glass suspended to the roof, the whisper of the trees, the blue sea in front, the blue sky above, the brilliant gaiety of all around, the perfect independence and ease, all go to fill up a picture, the memory of which in after-life is always tinged with a thought of sadness that the chances are ten thousand to one against its being presented again.

The pipe smoked, we betake ourselves to various pastimes. Some of us gather round the old priest, who is rapidly becoming voluble and familiar under the combined influences of beef and beer, and make him spin yarns of old Japan, or induce him to show us some of his sacred mysteries in the shape of books and wall scrolls. Our artist wanders away through the woods in search of "bits," and he finds plenty to choose from—brown urchins grouped around a house-door; an old wife spinning homely blue garments at her house front; a wayside shrine amidst bamboo branches;

a pedlar displaying his wares to a group of laughing damsels; a couple of pilgrims clad in dusky white, with tinkling bells and long staves, on their road to the Holy Mountain.

Others improvise a game of cricket with paddles as bats, a couple of bamboo stems as wickets, and a fishing-net cork for a ball. Others again hold athletic sports, and tire themselves out with high and long jumping, and putting the stone. One great Devonshire man managed to put it through the temple roof. Our laughter and chatter ring out strangely at this quiet, sequestered spot, and how that pale, almond-eyed goddess can squat there in her gilded shrine with the shouting and noise of a dozen exuberant young Englishmen about her, without sending a tidal-wave or a typhoon to engulf us, is a question seriously mooted, and quieted by the suggestion that the old priest does ample penance for us after our departure.

And so the pleasant afternoon is whiled away, until the sun begins to sink behind the cone of Fusi-yama, and the commodore suggests that preparations be made for a start.

So the old priest receives his present of food and drink and money, the children are sent off delighted to their homes, each with an empty bottle, and amidst a volley of "Sayonaras" we shove off, and start on our homeward voyage.

The wind has gone down with the sun, so we are obliged to have recourse to paddles, hence not much in the way of episode or adventure marks our return journey.

The commodore strikes up a wild Scottish croon which he calls a song, but which has nothing in common with a song but chorus, and our voices echo weirdly over this dark, moonlit expanse of water. The little Yokoska steamer speeds through our midst, and her passengers give us a round of cheers, and in two hours and a half from the time of embarkation we glide alongside the boat-house. The canoes are given over to the care of the "sendoes," and we go our different ways unanimously declaring that we have had a glorious trip.

Perhaps new fashions and new influences have been at work during the ten years which have elapsed since this cruise was made; perhaps a new generation prefers lawn-tennis and promenading in the public gardens to the old-fashioned pastimes. However that may be, all who can remember the cruises of the Yokohama Canoe

Club must look back to them as amongst the pleasantest experiences of a life so full of pleasure, that it can scarcely be realised in after years when the conditions of life are changed.

BLACKTHORN.

SHE sleeps! Ah, welcome spell of rest
To tired hands and brain oppressed!

Her morning task is done.
With what a soft pathetic grace
The chill March sunbeams kiss her face,
My poor work-wearied one!

I sit me softly by her side,
A little space I may abide,
To watch her breathing free;
Ah me! the thin, care-sharpened cheek,
The sunken brows, the dumbly speak
Of all she shares with me!

I wooed her from the lap of wealth,
While strong in youth, and proud of health,
I thought the world my own;
And she, sweet soul, put lightly by
The gauds that charm the worldly eye,
And lived for me alone.

I look upon her sleeping face,
And by her pallid cheek I place
A tiny blackthorn spray;
Meet symbol of her joyless life,
For we are conquered in the strife,
Are beaten in the fray.

The roses of this lower world
Were not for us, the wild winds hurled
Afar our hopes' young buds;
And grim misfortune's sullen tide
Swamped all life's landscape far and wide,
Like February floods.

Ah, trusting heart! too true to me,
Ah, tender wife! 'tis hard for thee,
This round of labour done:
The blackthorn's leafless pearly spray,
Instead of rosy-clustered may,
And cloud instead of sun.

What! wakest thou to hear my moan?
Ah, darling, in thy tender tone
Lies life's best music yet;
Though worldly ways are closed to me,
God gave me all in giving thee,
My heart hath no regret.

Take thou this little blackthorn spray
I plucked upon my homeward way,
It doth us comfort bring;
Though hope has failed, true love survives,
The "blackthorn winter" of our lives
Leads to eternal spring!

VIRGINIA.

A STORY.

LOOKING down from a high window in the Piazza di Spagna, in Rome, one sees all sorts of figures and all sorts of doings.

There was not much shade anywhere. The sun reigned high in his mid-day glory and the time of the year was May.

A little valley of shade filled the bit of street which led up to the Pincio, but being mid-day, there were only some boys at play there on the white, dusty ground.

Over the way some balconies were shrinking away into the strip of shade which just swept down the faces of the houses there. Some English girls stood out—who but English would stand bare-headed, even in the shadow, of a May noon!

They were looking down, and they saw the boys at play, and they saw the two gaily-painted stands, under which there were the girls selling fresh lemons, and where clear water was always running over the marble slabs, suggesting coolness and refreshment. There were two young priests sauntering down the street of the Propaganda, and there were the high, broad steps, the Spanish steps, leading up to the chapel where the nuns sing—or are said to sing—so sweetly; there were big hotels, with all the green outer blinds shut fast, and there was the circulating-library at the corner, with its rows of books and its rows of photographs showing themselves beneath the wide awning.

There was a string of the little hackney-carriages that are such a godsend to hard-working tourists; their drivers asleep in them. The very dogs, shaved and pink-skinned, lay with their four legs all stretched out in the utmost incapacity of laziness. Sleep and dreams ruled the hour.

Yet there were some people who worked even at mid-day in Rome.

Coming down from the Pincio, three oblong moving whitenesses made the bit of dark, shady street look like one of the black-and-white diamond-paved floors of the churches.

Three pairs of white-stockinged feet showed forth; a little white curly dog ran out into the glare of white sunlight; three girls followed him, carrying on their heads the oblong shallow baskets in which the laundresses of Rome send the snowy linen home.

"In?" No; "on." The clothes are daintily packed on the huge basket-trays, and are balanced on girls' heads.

"Do they ever get spilt?" you ask.

Never—never. The girls are as light as roes; with their brown, bare hands on their hips, and with their limbs free and their heads firmly erect, how can they slip? They never dream of such weakness.

"I have been six times to the Londra to-day," said one girl, Nita. "And very likely a load to carry back now."

"You are grand! The less you say about the washing you do the better,"

retorted the second, a shortish girl. "How much do you rub?"

She was a square-looking girl. Her elbows were square, her shoulders were square, her brown, swarthy face was broad and square—she was not pretty, neither did she seem to be good-tempered.

"You are too curious," and the third girl laughed merrily. She was just the opposite of Maria, or Mariuccia, as they called her; she was as lovely as the other was plain, she was tall and erect, with a graceful, free step, and her face would one day, when she grew older, be surely the grandly-featured face that one expects a Roman woman to have. Now she was only a young girl, and her face was delicate in outline, the glad lips were apart and gay, and her dark eyes laughed. "Yes, that is it," she repeated; "you are too curious. The mother and I, we send the clothes home white, and we iron them well; we make all the pretty embroidery and the lace look nice—never you mind the rubbing."

"Just like you! All for show!" said Mariuccia crossly. "Get out of my way, you stupid dog!" and one foot went out with a jerk towards the white gambolling dog.

"You would kick my Lili!" cried Virginia. "I hate you—I hate you!" and with one long, swift step she put her tall strong self between the girl and the little dog. An Italian is quick and fiery. Virginia could laugh—nay, she was far more ready to laugh than to scold, but her tongue was sharp too, and could sting. "Lili is an angel!" she hurried on; "but I can make her bite you, so take care!"

"Can you? I don't believe it. Lili is just the same meek incapable as her master—yes, don't you think I know who gave her to you?"

"You——"

"Tonio Bucci gave her——" began the first girl, Nita.

"As if I did not know, the foolish man! Truly he is as soft as the milk he sells."

"The milk is sour for thee—eh, Mariuccia?" and Nita nudged the girl's arm. "I wouldn't show I was angry."

There is some good advice that stings one more sharply than a taunt, and of this sort was this counsel of Nita's.

"Angry? I'm not angry. I'm thankful to anyone who'll take such an insipidity out of my way."

But Mariuccia's face flushed red, and

seeing the unlucky Lili come before her just at this moment, the ready foot struck out again with the undisguised intent of administering a kick.

This time the aim was sure, and Lili with a squeal darted sideways with her bushy white tail between her legs.

Nita was a step in the rear, Virginia had sailed majestically ahead and aloof from the others—was she not too proud to condescend to listen to such rude speeches as Mariuccia had been making?

So they were moving leisurely across the piazza when Lili got her kick. Now in the first agony of bodily pain the most patient ignores the difference between friend and foe—Lili ran from Mariuccia, but it was to dash full tilt against her mistress's feet.

It was all done in a second.

The frightened dash—the entanglement of feet and of dog—the flutter and splutter of Lili's soft body and furry, whisking tail, a sharp short bark, and alas! the basket on Virginia's head was down, and all the dainty folded linen was flying over the dusty sun-scorched pavement! Fair embroideries and gossamer laces, all so clear, and white, and fresh, were spoiled. Spoiled irrevocably! How could they be saved from the griminess of the fine dust?

"Lucky it's you and not me!" sneered Mariuccia. "I shouldn't dare to take such things to the hotel. They'll do for your signore; for people in the pensione it is not so bad."

"You think so?" retorted Virginia. "What do you know? My signore need have better treatment than your always-moving strangers. Have I not had them all the winter? Nay, for two winters? And are they not good to us? Ahimè! Ahimè!" she threw her arms aloft, and then with her sharp cry she let them fall, and swing on each side of her. "Do they not start this very night on the long journey to their home? What can I do? Santa Maria! would I not rather spoil all the clothes for all the week than these of my dear signore?"

"Bah! there's no harm done if they go away to-night. You can't lose trade, anyway."

Virginia, crying and kneeling amidst her ruins, took no heed.

"That's your honesty!" shouted Nita with disgust. "One sees now why you never get beyond hotel-work. People would not send to you twice. Go! Leave me and Virginia!" She turned her back on

Mariuccia, and carefully set her own basket in safety. "Pick them up. There, shake them a bit!"

"It is no use! it is no use!" wailed Virginia. "And on the day of all others when I would have them lovely. Ah, they were beautiful when the mother and I finished them!"

"They are not so bad."

"Don't you speak—there!" and she held up a garment whose lace was decorated with irregular streaks and patches of yellow dirt. In a second it was thrown on the top of the pile Nita had deftly set back in order. "Will I stand ashamed before my signore, and take such things to them? No, never. I shall take them all home again and wash them afresh."

"You? This afternoon?" and Nita stood apart, looking amazed.

"It must be. I will tell Tonio afterwards; he will understand."

Nita nodded her head quickly.

"Probably," she said with meaning. "You remember Mariuccia will be there, too. She will make him understand with a vengeance."

"Do I fear Mariuccia?" proudly said Virginia.

The English girls on their balcony saw the accident, but their minds were full of other thoughts; they did not notice that the unlucky girl was Virginia, a protégée of theirs, and as to thinking of the safety of the clothes, they were full of the excitement of going home after a winter in Rome. For a second they had turned to speak to someone within the room, and when their eyes again fell on the piazza it was to see two Italian friends of theirs crossing from the shadowy opposite street towards their own house.

The May evening was falling cool and soft. All the world had been out. What streams of people were driving along the Corso and round the Pincio! How the gay band tossed its fanfaronade of operatic airs and its voluptuous waltzes on the brilliant air; how the brightly-dressed nurses, with their grand muslin aprons and streamers, sauntered about with the white babies; how pleasantly and graciously did the Queen bow and smile as she made her daily visit to her loyal people!

The two Nelson girls and their mother were strolling about, too. Their Italian friends were with them, and one can easily imagine the sort of talk that would every now and again come up; the English

people were going away, and the friends would not see them for six months. Nay, who knew? Perhaps one girl would not come to Rome the next winter.

This one was a wild girl; she said things as they came into her head. She was declaring, with a little flourish of her hand: "Is there any place I love as I love Rome? Should I not die if I were to dream that never again should I set my devoted eyes upon it?"

"Signorina, you jest. Is it not true that before next winter——"

"I shall be Mrs. Brown? Yes. That supposition may certainly have become a fact; still, you may imagine the aforesaid Mrs. Brown weeping her eyes out when her family pack the family-trunks next October for Rome!"

"Gwen, there goes Virginia, and we shall miss her."

"Where—how?" and Gwen turned to right and left.

"Behind you now—half-way down the road."

"What is she doing up here?"

"Don't know. There is some merry-making going on down below, beyond the Borghese Gardens. I caught my lady looking that way——"

"I shall simply go home. No, Signor Para—no, I want no escort. I am bent on domestic duties, and you would only be in the way."

She went off, and she overtook Virginia, and she heard the story of the misfortune that morning.

"But how could you do all that work again this afternoon? Was not your brother Tito to be married this morning? Were you not to have a beautiful festa this afternoon?" So said Gwen, in her headlong fashion.

"It is true, signorina. But could I behave so badly to you and to the signora? No."

"Well! don't be wretched over it now. Get back quickly."

With a few more words the two girls parted. They understood many little things of each other's lives, from the simple fact that each one had a little love-story lying behind the common ways and works of every day.

Alas, and alas! It was a black day for Virginia; she never divined how the thing was done, it was done and past remedy. Of course the hard, cruel fate did not swoop down upon her all at once, but she noted that day as the day when Tonio Bucci fell away from her.

She had no redress. What do we say? She never sought for redress. A Roman girl is proud, she would never sue for love, she would hold her head erect and look down stoically and in silence upon the faithless lover, whose steps went daily farther and farther from her. She and her mother lived alone, they came in time to hold themselves apart from the other women.

And who was Virginia's rival?

Mariuccia, who pretended once that she despised Antonio!

Nita, Virginia's friend, flicked her thumbs at Mariuccia, and cried: "Bah! That Mariuccia loves, or does not love, as the humour comes. Bucci will have his master's shop soon. If Bucci had not gold he might whistle for Mariuccia."

"Serve him right if a richer man crosses his path," dryly put in a woman who heard her.

"That is your way. It is not mine," said Nita. "I have promised a candle to the Santissima Madre if she get them well married before Corpus Domini."

"You! That is your friendship—eh? You'd reward a poltroon, a base fellow?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Mariuccia a reward? That is good," and Nita laughed again.

Some two or three weeks after this, the whole of Rome seemed flocking into St. Peter's. It was the great festival of Corpus Domini, and the grand procession came filing in through the mighty columns, and in at the vast door. Incense perfumed the warm air; hundreds of priests gravely walked along carrying the treasures. Scarlet-robed cardinals officiated; mitred dignitaries, in vestments of gorgeous silver tissues, chanted and genuflected before the high altar; strings of blue, and of green, and of scarlet-coated young seminarists from the various colleges made lines of clear colour in the dense crowd, which by itself was just a moving mass of radiant colour.

On the edge of the crowd was a group—a marriage group all in festa dress. What voluminous skirts, what gold earrings, what lace kerchiefs! The bride was short and square; she pulled at her newly-made husband's sleeve, so that she might see over the heads of the people. Of course he helped her, but methinks he remembered a tall girl, whose bearing was proud and stately, and whom any man—yes, any man—would have felt it a glory to call his wife. That girl would have seen well by his side, without giving him that irritating pull. Tonio Bucci, of course, was this newly-made husband. Google

The summer burnt itself out, and autumn went too—the sickly, pestiferous Roman autumn, which brings the heavy fever air from the Campagna, and which feeds the dreaded enemy by the damps and the rains of the falling year.

That time went, and real winter, the winter which makes Rome full of foreign visitors, had come. Many amongst these were people who came every year, people from colder lands of the north, who see that life is better worth living under the genial Italian sun.

Gwen did not come, but her mother and sister did. A few weeks passed, and then Gwen herself was in Rome again. She was now a glad young wife, and she and her husband having been far afield into Eastern lands for their long honeymoon, were taking a glimpse of Rome on their way back to England.

She had to ask after five hundred people, to use a comfortable exaggeration, but in the interests of our story we will make no mention of the four hundred and ninety-nine, and just pick out one of her old friends, Virginia Caldi.

"Not married!" cried Gwen. "What went wrong?"

She heard the story.

"I know that Mariuccia. I saw her more than once with Virginia. The man must have been conjured out of himself."

"You let Virginia infect you with her own mad admiration of him," answered May, Gwen's sister.

"Not at all so. I saw for myself. Did I not see him often enough out at the Caldis' cottage? He repents it by this time."

"I don't know about repentance. He may have repented, but now there is no knowing what he feels. He is a free man. Mariuccia is dead."

"Mariuccia dead!"

May nodded her head.

"She was self-willed—'as self-willed as an English girl,' I was told, and she went out in the wet and cold; she died of fever. Yes, that was it. And now—" The girl was silent a moment.

"Well—now?" echoed Gwen.

"Now Bucci is tearing his hair—that is an elegant metaphor, of course, as you know his head just owns a stubble and no more—well, tearing his hair at the feet of Virginia."

"Then it will be all right; she always did love him."

"I know nothing about that, I leave all that to you. She'll have nothing to say to him, anyhow. Old Madame Caldi exists in

a flood of tears, for Virginia declares she will go and serve the nuns at St. Trinita dei Monti. She'll be a nun herself if she can."

"Nonsense!"

"True, nevertheless."

Wherewith Gwen resolved upon becoming a matchmaker, as it has been said that all good women are, and she carried her husband off for a walk. The walk took them out a long way beyond the Porta del Popolo, and, in fact, only ended at Virginia's cottage.

This is what came of that visit.

Only a week after, Gwen and her husband had to leave Rome, and on the morning of the day they left, Virginia, as of old, brought her basket-load of daintily got-up linen home.

"You do not look like a nun," began Gwen half teasingly.

"Oh, signora, that is not a thing to laugh at. No, not at all." The girl lifted her tall figure with that simple pride of hers which had still such a grand dignity in it. "No, no; and, signora," she seized Gwen's hands in her own with all the fiery earnestness of an Italian; "if you had not come to me, I should be there now. Yes, this would have been the day when I should have left the mother, and Tonio, and all."

"But if your vocation is there—there with the nuns," Gwen's eyes tried to look grave. "Suppose one day you find you would rather be singing with the good sisters than cooking Tonio's soup?"

"Signora! Is that possible?" and Virginia dropping her friend's hands clasped her own. "Shall I ever think that?—I?"

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

HEREFORDSHIRE.

IN entering Herefordshire, we come upon a kind of English Rhineland, a county of bright, swift rivers, of sunny hills and fertile valleys, of castled crags, and towers of robber knights. Instead of the vineyards we have orchards far more beautiful, and sparkling cider takes the place of the costly wines of Rudesheim or Marco-brunner. Pity it seems that no poet or novelist has arisen to throw the glamour of romance over this rich and charming county where every stream has its legend, and every castle its story, and where the varied life-streams of Roman and Briton, of Saxon and Norman, have met and mingled, sometimes in peace, and sometimes in war, and have left a rich drift of

custom and folk-lore that still awaits adequate exposition. Of historic sites and places, which have made their mark in English annals, there is no lack in this rich border county.

A few miles from Ludlow brings us to the ancient castle of Wigmore, once a semi-royal seat, which might have vied with proud Windsor in its extent and state. A few ruined walls and towers are all that remain of former grandeur, but the site is a fine one, commanding a great expanse of country, and the lines of the ancient enceinte are still to be traced. From Wigmore Castle rode out proud Mortimer with a clump of lances in his train, when stout Earl Simon ruled the land in the name of King Henry the Third, while Prince Edward was his prisoner, held in careless captivity at Widmarsh by Hereford. There had been going and coming among the monks, between Abbey Dore in the golden valley and Wigmore Priory that nestled beneath the castle of the Mortimers, and thus it was that the movements of the Prince and Lord Mortimer were accurately timed, for Edward that day went a hunting with his guards, and led the chase northwards, till presently, on the brow of a hill, he espied the glitter of steel and the gay pennons of Mortimer and his knights. That night the Prince supped at Wigmore Castle, and soon after was at the head of a powerful army, of which Mortimer's vassals from Shropshire and Herefordshire formed a powerful contingent. Roger Mortimer was one of the three commanders at Evesham, where Earl Simon was slain, and from that time the house of Mortimer was loaded with honours and lordships. Roger's son married a kinswoman of Edward's Queen, a beautiful Castilian maid, and brought her home to his stately home at Wigmore. And the son of this pair, with royal blood in his veins—the royalty strangely mixed of Wales and Normandy and Castile—may have felt the crown of England within his grasp, but missed his hold, and came to his bitter end on Tyburn-tree.

Wigmore, however, with the earldom of March, or of the Marches of Wales, was restored to the descendants of the attainted Mortimer, and again, by a marriage with a daughter of the Plantagenets, the crown of England almost fell to the lords of Wigmore. Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, had been long acknowledged the heir-presumptive to his cousin Richard, when Bolingbroke snatched the crown from the hands of the feeble king.

Mortimer retired to Wigmore, leaving his children as hostages in the hands of the new king. Soon after, Owen Glendwr raised the national standard in Wales, and coming down from the mountains with his wild Welshmen, began to lay waste the English land. With the hastily-gathered county levies, the men of Weobley and Leominster, Mortimer fell suddenly upon Owen, as the Welshmen were fording the river Arrow, between Pembury and Eardialand, at a point where the river divided into many branches; but, although taken at a disadvantage, and fighting up to their waists in water, the hardy Welsh put the Herefordshire men to flight and made a prisoner of Mortimer.

When all athwart there came
A post from Wales laden with heavy news,
Whose worst was that the noble Mortimer,
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
Against the irregular and wild Glendower,
Was by the rude hands of the Welshmen taken.

Some may share the suspicion manifested by King Henry, according to Shakespeare, as to the bona fides of Mortimer's battle, and declare, with him, "he never did encounter with Glendower," and that his captivity in Wales was a skilful device for escaping the dangers of his position; and Percy's testimony as to the conflict "on gentle Severn's sedge bank," the Severn being a long way from the actual scene of the encounter, whether sham or real, was, perhaps deservedly, received with polite incredulity. The well-known story of the conspiracy that was afterwards brewed between Percy, Glendwr, and Mortimer, with its ending at the battle of Shrewsbury, has already been alluded to. But it seems that even after this crushing blow, Glendwr and Mortimer, who had married his daughter, still held out against the English king. And soon after Shrewsbury battle, a Welsh army took the field, reinforced by French auxiliaries—for the French were in the plot against Henry, and landed a considerable force in Wales to help Glendwr. The army encamped near Leominster, on Ivington Hill, where their entrenchments are still to be seen; and Prince Henry, coming against them with his English levies, did not venture to attack the position; but dissensions broke out, as a matter of course, among the Welsh chiefs, and their army melted away without having fought a battle.

It was in these Welsh wars that a stout Herefordshire knight, Sir John Oldcastle, afterwards better known in the south as Lord Cobham, from his marriage with the

heiress of Cobham, attracted the notice of young Prince Hal. Sir John was probably born at Almeley Castle, of which a grass-covered mound is the only relic, and stories of early freaks with the wild prince may have furnished the groundwork for Shakespeare's wonderful picture of Sir John Falstaff. But it was the old knight of popular and unfriendly tradition that Shakespeare drew, for the Lollard martyr was as brave and true a man as ever wore knightly belt, however wide in its girth that belt may have been. From Old-castle's influence in encouraging and protecting the Lollards, Herefordshire became an early stronghold of the new faith.

There is still, however, something more to be said of the Mortimers, although the fate of the last lineal representatives of the race is obscure. But the air of Windsor seems to have been fatal to the young scions of the stock, and Edmund died a refugee rather than a prisoner in Wales, or perhaps concealed by some faithful retainer not far from his own splendid castle of Wigmore. Eventually the castle and estates came to the house of York by the marriage of their chief with Edmund Mortimer's sister and heiress, and thus Wigmore became a semi-royal seat, and in the troubled times that preceded the Wars of the Roses, a secure retreat for the princes of the house of York.

It was to Wigmore that Edward, the future king, retired when the crushing defeat of Wakefield and the death of his father seemed to have extinguished the chances of the Yorkists. And here he rallied the tenants of his estates and the personal adherents of the house of York. Margaret, hurrying southwards to secure London and the Tower, detached a force under Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, to hold out a hand to the Welshmen, who by this time had become chiefly Lancastrian in their sympathies, and having joined the Welsh levies, to crush the pretender Edward in the ruins of his castle. Edward, however, did not wait for the blow to fall, but marched out from Wigmore with all the men he could muster, chiefly the men of Ludlow and Shrewsbury. Hardly four miles had Edward marched, when the forces of the Lancastrians were descried drawn up by the banks of the pleasant river Lugg. Mortimer's Cross is a hamlet where sundry cross-roads meet, and where no doubt the piety of the Mortimers had caused a wayside cross to be erected, such as are still to be met with

at most of the Norman *carrefours*—the object of rural processions, where at sunset, during Lent, the women of the village assemble and sing the litanies of the Virgin. Close by the cross is the great Westfield, an open plain sloping down to the river. The two armies joined battle in the misty sunshine of a frosty February day. The bulk of the Lancastrian troops were Welsh and Irish, whose fierce, wild rush was borne back by the phalanx of English lances. The English bowmen did the rest, and soon the half-clad warriors were flying for the hills. The chiefs, encumbered with their armour, were unable or ashamed to share the flight of their followers, and many Welshmen of note were slain or taken prisoners. Among these last was old Owen Tudor, whose comely face had long ago captured the heart of the queen-dowager of England. His son, Jasper of Pembroke, and his grandson Henry, afterwards to be king, escaped in the confusion, and made their way through the heart of Wales, and sailed for Brittany. But Owen was taken to Hereford, and there beheaded, with many other of his countrymen. As the day declined upon the field of slaughter, men noted with awe and wonder the appearance of three suns in the firmament above, a portent of high encouragement to the victors, but one that filled the superstitious Welshmen with dismay.

Edward's success, however, was eventually fatal to Wigmore, which, after figuring as a royal residence in the reign of Edward the Fourth, was left to fall to ruin and decay by his successors.

Some of the possessions of the Mortimers in the end fell into the hands of the all-grasping Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, and when, on the death of Edward the Sixth, the duke attempted to place his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, upon the throne, the strong Protestant feeling in the county—originally instilled by Oldcastle, the portly knight, it will be remembered—drew together a considerable armed force to support the Protestant succession, in the person of Lady Jane. These forces assembled on the brow of a hill called Cour-senah, that slopes down to the little river Pinsley, about a mile west of Leominster; and not far from Glendwr's Camp. Here the army entrenched itself, and awaited the orders of their chiefs in London. But as time went on, and no news came from the duke, who was, indeed, already a prisoner in the Tower, the force gradually

malted away, and the loyal men of Leominster, who had an inkling of which way things were going, sallied out with the confidence of men who are on the winning side, and dispersed the remnant. Whereupon much honour and profit accrued to the brave burgesses of Leominster.

Leominster itself, although it owes its name to an old monastic settlement, has not much to show for its ancient minster, unless some Norman parts of the old parish church are a portion of the more recent building. But the old Saxon minster that Merewald built, the father of the sainted lady of Much Wenlock, was thoroughly destroyed by the Danes, assisted by the Welsh, who were always ready to sink their Christianity to harry the Saxon, and who, in a talent for destructiveness, seem to have taken the lead even of the Danes; their joint efforts, anyhow, have left even the site uncertain.

From Leominster, road, rail, and river—the latter with many pleasant windings through a rich and charming country—lead towards the county town of Hereford, that lies in a fold of the Wye, here hurrying smoothly down from the distant hills of Wales. The early town was at Kenchester, a Roman station of some importance, a few miles westwards, which the local tradition describes as destroyed by an earthquake. The Welsh called the place *Trefawydd* from the fir-trees that grew about it. When Kenchester was abandoned, a new settlement grew up at a convenient ford on the River Wye, which the Welsh knew as *Henfordd*, or the old road; probably the British trackway here crossed the river before the Romans built a bridge higher up, and when that bridge was destroyed in the earthquake, or more probably by wild Welshmen, the traffic necessarily reverted to the old way. The Saxons seem to have played upon the Welsh name of the place and converted it into Hereford, or the army ford, perhaps in memory of the memorable raid when the Danish “here,” or host, destroyed Leominster. But the place itself is an ancient walled city, that was probably in existence long before the Danish invasion, and if we may hazard a conjecture, was likely enough originally a colony of Romano-British refugees, founded under the protection of one of the Welsh princes.

We have been accustomed to speak of the British population as driven before the Anglo-Saxons into Wales, and although recent researches have thrown a doubt

upon the thoroughness of this sweeping-away process, yet no doubt there must have been a considerable number of the proud and haughty Celtic population who would prefer a life of poverty and exile among men of a kindred race, to remaining in servitude with their enemies. But it must be remembered that Wales was already occupied by stubborn and warlike tribes, tenacious of their territorial rights, each tribesman entitled to his free tillage of common land, and to follow the chase wherever he listed. There was a warmth of national feeling that ensured safety and hospitality to men of a kindred race; but it is evident that the new comers could not be admitted to the privileges of the free tribesman. They became especially the care of the chiefs and princes, who settling them here and there on the waste lands of the community, exacted a certain share of the produce as rent. The burdens of the community—chiefly, in those rude times, the support of the princes and chiefs, their dogs, their hunting train—were thrown upon these communities of aliens, whom the Norman lawyers, by a sort of false analogy, classed as villains. But as well as the agricultural wanderers who found a home on the Welsh hillsides, there must have been a number of immigrants, artisans, and craftsmen from the ruined Roman towns, for whom there was no fixed place in the Celtic organisation. And these people may be looked for in the border towns such as Hereford, settled under the direct protection of the prince of the country. We have the peculiar customs of the city to confirm our conjecture.

Thus, to quote briefly from Domesday Book, we find that in the time of King Edward the Confessor, there were a hundred and three tenants settled within and without walls. Every entire measure—the plot of ground allotted to each citizen—paid sevenpence-halfpenny and fourpence towards hiring horses, while the tenants did personal service of reaping three days in August, and of gathering hay one day, as the sheriff might appoint. Whoever had a horse went three times a year with the sheriff to the county and hundred courts at *Urmlaia*. When the king went to hunt, one person went from each house to the stand or station in the wood. Other tenants, not having entire measures, found three men to guard the king when he came into the city. Any one leaving the city might sell his measure to another who would do proper service, but the bailiff

had the third penny. When a burgess died serving in the army with his horse, the king had the horse and arms, or, if he served without a horse, ten shillings or his land and houses. If anyone had not devised his property before his death, the king had the stock belonging to his land. Every man whose wife brewed either within or without the city paid tenpence. Six smiths paid every one a penny for his forge, and made a hundred and twenty nails from the king's iron. Each received threepence by custom, and these smiths were free from all other service. Then there were seven moneyers, who had the privilege of coining, a staff which shows comparatively greater circulation of wealth than at present. For these moneyers were master workmen, with a considerable following, over whom they had full jurisdiction; with the curious provision that if the moneyer died intestate all he had went to the king.

Some have seen in these curious penalties upon intestacy, and the so-called heriots due at the death of a burgess, evidence of Danish occupation, for with the Danes, who were practically an army in possession of a hostile country, naturally enough, when a soldier died, his horse and arms were restored to the common arsenal. But there is no other trace of Danish settlement in this valley of the Wye, and it is more probable that we have here just a survival of Welsh jurisprudence as to the alien, who having no inherent rights could transmit none to his descendants, while the power of disposing of his goods by will was one that he had acquired under the influence of the Church, whose interests had to this extent reversed the ancient Celtic polity.

In all this we have something quite different from the free cities of Teutonic origin; but the continuance of the Celtic customs shows that the city must have passed without any shock or catastrophe from the rule of the British prince to that of the Saxon king. And in the same quiet way the city passed from Saxon to Norman dominion. Nothing was changed for the burgesses of Hereford, for the smiths, for the moneyers—nothing except the name of their over-lord, about which probably they did not much trouble themselves. And the same may be said of the county generally, which submitted quietly to William, and paid its customary rents in honey and produce without any disturbance.

One change indeed the Normans probably made. They must have introduced cider. Re-introduced it, perhaps, for the use of cider must have been as well known in Roman Britain as it was in Roman Gaul. But the Saxons, with their love of strong, heady drinks, had neglected the cultivation of the apple; while many of the new settlers in the valley of the Wye came from the Pays de Caux, where the culture of the apple and the making of cider has been practised from time immemorial, and here in this beautiful cultured county the apple-trees perhaps still flourish that were grafted from the Norman rennet.

The beauty of the country is curiously commemorated in historic nomenclature, for in the old Celtic speech it was called *Eayllwyg*, meaning the fair and open country; and the Romans, hearing that its inhabitants called themselves the men of *Eayllwyg*, travestied the name into *Silures*, which, if it has no particular meaning, is much easier to spell. And the fair open country of Hereford and Monmouth is the ancient *Siluria*, the name of which the geologists have carried to the uttermost parts of the earth. Hereabouts fought Caractacus, and any one of these knolls crowned with ancient earthworks may have witnessed the last struggles of a gallant race.

Perhaps we may find some trace of the *Silures* in Archenfield, one of the most interesting regions of the west, a district that forms an irregular peninsula enclosed by a wide bend of the Wye and the tributary streams of Dore and Monnow. In the time of the Confessor, *Ergyng*, as the district was then called, perhaps originally *Argwyn*, or the beautiful country, was inhabited by a population half Welsh and half Saxon, dwelling together in amity, and with peculiar laws and customs. Although mainly Welsh in origin, these people were loyal to the English rule, and claimed as their privilege the right of forming the van of the royal army in its advance upon Wales, and the rear when the army retired. Here, again, in this out-of-the-way district, the Conquest made little difference, and the people retained their customs and language to a very late period. Long after the rest of England owned the supremacy of the royal justice, in Archenfield murder might be commuted for a fine, and personal retaliation was allowed and even enjoined on the injured. And yet in Archenfield Christianity must have existed almost from the days of the Apostles. Saint Dubritius, indeed, is

credited with the conversion of the district, at the end of the fifth, or the beginning of the sixth century; a saint who is sometimes called primate of Wales, and who is said to have crowned King Arthur. And here in Archenfield is the very stone on which the great Prince was crowned, close by Moccas on the Wye, which forms the extreme northward apex of the district. The dedication of sundry of the churches in the district to the saint, noticeably Hentland Church, near Ross, which is anglicised from "Henllan," meaning the old church, seems to confirm the tradition.

The chief fortress of this district is Goodrich Castle, which crowns a red sandstone cliff in one of the charming bends of the Wye; while a modern antique castle, Goodrich Court, occupies an adjacent height. The ruins of the castle are of great interest, although its history as a fortress is confined to the solitary episode of a siege in the Civil War. The towers command a magnificent view of the noble basin of the Wye, with the Malvern Hills on one side and the Black Mountains on the other, and the skirts of our British Black Forest. Goodrich itself is noted for its connection with the family of Jonathan Swift, whose grandfather was rector of the parish, a militant parson who delighted in vexing the souls and harassing the bodies of the Puritans.

His devotion to King Charles was shown by his visit to the king when, poor and almost deserted, he took refuge in Raglan Castle after the battle of Naseby. "I have brought my coat for the king," cried the enthusiastic parson, taking off his outer garment. The governor of the castle remarked with a supercilious glance that he did not think it was worth much. "Then take my waistcoat, too," cried the parson, stripping off that also, when the chink of broad pieces—three hundred of them, sewn within the lining—ensured the loyal parson a heartier welcome. But when we hear of his placing infernal machines in a ford of the river which the Parliamentary cavalry have to cross, by means of which some thirty troopers are unhorsed and drowned, we may charitably hope that the dean who tells the story was drawing that long bow which he knew so well how to manage.

From Goodrich we may sail by many a pleasant reach of the winding Wye till we ask with the poet:

Who taught that heaven-directed spire to rise?
The man of Ross, each sleeping babe replies.

Pope was staying at Pengethly when he

wrote *The Man of Ross*, and but for this we should never have heard of this local benefactor; nay, probably the walks he laid out and the open spaces he adorned would all are this have been annexed by neighbouring proprietors but for the guardianship of the poem. Coleridge, it is less generally known, visited Ross, and wrote a fragmentary eulogy upon John Kyrle, of which the following lines have a sad personal interest:

But if like mine through life's distressful scone
Lonely and sad thy pilgrimage hath been,
And if thy breast with heart-sick anguish fraught
Thou journeyed onward tempest-tossed in thought,
Here cheat thy cares!

From the neighbourhood of Ross we may explore the green slopes of the Malvern Hills, with their ancient camps and earthworks, and their relics of pre-historic man. Pre-eminent among these lies Herefordshire Beacon, a strong fort of a primitive people, a city of refuge for the pastoral people of the valleys, for their flocks and herds, and all their belongings. A triple ditch and triple mounds enclose a space of forty-three acres in extent, while from the central beacon, the fiery warning or appeal for help spreads its rays to farthest Gwent and to the hills of distant Powys. About the skirts of this old British city, ancient superstition clings, and wild stories are current as if some terrible catastrophe or slaughter had left a curse about the place. Awful is the accursed shadow of Raggedstone Hill that every living creature avoids. Tradition has it, that while Wolsey, the future cardinal, lived at Morton Court, where he was tutor or domestic chaplain with the Nanfans, he once upon a time fell into a deep slumber while poring over a book in the garden of the old moated mansion. When the young man awoke he discovered to his horror that he was overcast by the accursed shadow. From that moment, and all through his wonderful career, Wolsey, it is said, was in his heart convinced that he should come to no good end, and when he fell, he felt that the curse long delayed had come upon him at last. A recent author has brought forward a long list of instances in which during the course of centuries the old superstition has been verified; among the most recent of these, Mr. Huskisson, his brilliant career suddenly cut short at the opening of the Manchester and Liverpool Railway, the first victim of the new iron age, but slain by the curse that came down from dim antiquity; for he in his youth had unwittingly fallen under the shadow of Raggedstone Hill.

As to the origin of the curse, it is popularly attributed to a wicked monk of Little Malvern, who, having had to crawl to the top of the hill on hands and knees by way of penance, is said in his rage and malevolence to have cursed the shadow of it wherever it should fall. But this explanation is rightly judged by the author already quoted to be scarcely adequate, and he suggests, as the scene does, some ancient scene of slaughter, of the Druids perhaps, or of some primitive tribe, where the victims, driven over the crest of the ridge to perish, turned to curse their murderers; a scene to be paralleled in recent days among the rocks of the Arabian desert where it is said that Palmer turned at bay before he was cast over the precipice and cursed his murderers and betrayers.

Then there is Bransill Castle almost within range of the fatal shadow, a fifteenth-century castellated mansion, once belonging to the Beauchamps, with the remains of a more ancient tower in a deep glen. The place is full of legendary terrors, with a tribe of family ghosts, to exorcise whom the only charm was said to be a box of the family bones.

Then there is the quaint little ancient town of Ledbury lying on the flank of the Malvern Hills, with memories of its old decayed manufactures that began Heaven knows when, but that have come peacefully to an end without much damage, as if all the inhabitants had made a snug little competence out of them, and then let them drop as not sufficiently genteel. A nice little town it is indeed, with quaint old houses in brick and timber, and a fine old timber market-house—if it be still standing—where there is talk of cider and perry, of hops and malt. All about here the Bishop of Hereford formerly held sway; the town was his, and his the lordship of the Malvern Hills, till you come to a ridge which forms the boundary of his jurisdiction, where there was a trench cut that is still visible, and called the Duke of Gloucester's ditch, the said Gloucester being a certain earl who flourished in the reign of Edward the First.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER IX. HELEN'S HOUSE.

THEO looked out from her high window at that stormy sunset. She saw it through and over a veil of lurid smoke, which made

strange effects of colour quite new to her eyes.

Mr. Goodall's house stood on high ground, facing west; in front of it there was a kind of small park with trees; then came the village of Woodcote, in which old thatched cottages, some of them half-timbered, were mixed with ugly rows of new red brick. The high road ran down to the north of Woodcote House, and through the chief part of the village. Lower in the valley it passed by Mr. Goodall's great pottery works, on the way to Mainley, which lay to the north again. All the broad valley which lay west of Woodcote was traversed by the railway, and one colliery succeeded another along its length; there were brick-works, too, adding their sulphur smoke to the blackness which disfigured a once pretty country.

Theo's window, in the new and highest part of Mr. Goodall's house, had a view across this valley to hills far distant; but beyond the railway, between her and them, there ran a green ridge with a line of Scotch firs and a group of poplars at the end of them, and more trees that seemed to cluster round buildings; beyond these the setting sun certainly caught some roofs of houses.

Helen had apologised for the smoke that was to be seen from her cousin's window—John had planted trees, but they were not yet grown tall enough to hide it. Theo said the smoke was rather beautiful, and she liked to see it; at which Helen laughed amiably.

Theo was very happy that evening. She had hardly known what it was to be cheerful all the summer, since the sad afternoon of the wedding, when Hugh took her away to his father's deathbed. Colonel North had lingered on a few days after that, but he was either unconscious or in great pain; and after he died Theo's only course had been to go straight to her grandmother. Certainly the time spent with poor Lady Redcliff had been neither peace nor rest.

It was pleasant to be with Helen again—dear soft old Nell, always, in her lazy way, affectionate and comforting, and quite unchanged by her eccentric step of marrying John Goodall. It was amusing to see her perfect content with the worthy man she had chosen, her seeming unconsciousness of his defects, her placid satisfaction with everything, except the smoke, that surrounded her. The house was most successful. The furniture was, perhaps, a

little too smart and new, too great a contrast with the old distinguished shabbiness of Linwood. This was a difficult point, and Mr. Goodall would not have allowed dogs in the house, even if Helen had cared for them, which she did not.

"You and I must scratch and tear about a little, Theo," said Helen. "We shall soon make the things look a little worn and nice. You may forget sometimes, and let Wool come in, when John isn't here to drive him out. John doesn't quite understand, you see; he thinks things ought always to be new."

But this, and a few other such small differences, seemed to be the only things that ruffled Helen's serenity. The outside of her house was not by any means disagreeably new. It was large, and built of red brick. Part of it might have been a hundred years old, but all the best rooms had been added by Mr. Goodall a few years ago, and most of the front was covered with climbing roses and clematis. A flight of white steps, with a fine glaring balustrade, was the ugliest and most pretentious thing about it; but the garden, with old trees in it, sloped prettily down to the park, and the flowers were splendid; the greenhouses, as well as the yards and stables, would have done credit to a much larger place. Altogether, many people might have thought Helen a fortunate woman.

Helen was delighted, for her part, to have her cousin with her again. She had thought of her at intervals all through the summer. It was true that she had not written to her much, but Colonel North's death had been a kind of separation, just as his illness all that last winter had been. Helen had always respected Uncle Henry, but she knew very well that he had never cared for her. This did not trouble her, but it made it difficult to sympathise heartily enough with Theo's grief at the loss of him.

Then John was a difficulty. He had begun his married life, like other mistaken men, by taking an immense interest in his wife's smallest concerns; and, therefore, of course, in her correspondence. He thought it a duty and privilege to read all her letters. This bored Helen a little; she had not been quite prepared for such absolute possession. It did not really make much difference to her, for she hated writing, and had no intimate friend but Theo; but the worst of it was that John, reading Theo's very unconventional letters, became rather prejudiced against her. He

thought Theo gave herself airs, and that Helen need not ask her to stay with them just yet. Before his marriage he had been meek and respectful about Theo, but this good state of mind had passed away.

Helen did not trouble herself to contradict him much, or to resent these opinions of his. She was really very fond of him in her way, and quite appreciated his devotion to herself. She therefore dropped the subject of her friend Theo, till one day Hugh North's letter came, giving such a melancholy account of her.

This brought out all the kindness and good-nature for which John Goodall had been given credit by his new relations. He was going to London on business, and he himself proposed that he should go to Lady Redcliff's, and bring Theo away with him.

"And it's no use doing things by halves," said he. "When you have got her, you had better keep her a good long time."

Helen smiled on him with great approval, and so he had carried out his plan, with satisfaction to himself and pity for Theo, which was much increased by his interview with her grandmother.

It was nearly a year since the two friends had seen much of each other, and they seemed to be back in that happy old time—that time when Theo's freer life had sometimes been a subject of secret envy to Helen, who was getting tired of the rule of her stepmother. No Mr. Goodall had appeared on the scene then.

After all, Theo saw, and she was not sorry to confess it, that her cousin was contented. Helen said she was happy, but some one has said that those who have never seen happiness may pass through life mistaking content for it. Perhaps natures like Helen's are not deep enough to hold happiness if it comes to them.

Helen came downstairs again late that night, leaving Theo in her room, and found her husband, who did not smoke, still sitting in the drawing-room. He was reading, but he laid down his book and was quite ready to welcome her. He wanted to tell her all that he had been doing in London; it was a new thing to have his wife's attention taken away from him, and he had not enjoyed that evening much, and was a little inclined to regret all he had so generously said about "a long visit;" but Helen knew how to drive these selfish thoughts away, for John was very much in love with her still.

"Well, you have got your friend, so I

hope you are contented," he said at last, when he had given her a full account of his adventures.

"Quite contented, thank you," said Helen with a yawn. "Isn't she handsome?"

"Very, I suppose, in her own style; but she is gone off since the wedding."

"Well, a little thinner; but she has had a good deal of bother, you know, and she looked better than usual that day. She is a most excellent creature, John. How she puts up with that awful grandmother of hers is a mystery to me."

"She is awful," said John in a slightly lowered tone, as if Lady Redcliff might have come in at the door. "But somehow, do you think there is any likeness——"

"Likeness between my Theo and that horrid old woman!" exclaimed his wife.

"My dear boy, you are out of your mind."

"No; I'll soon tell you what I mean. Your cousin is not of a meek disposition."

"She is tremendously generous and forgiving, and has not a shadow of conceit."

"Ah! but she is not meek—there is no humility about her."

"I don't know that. She thinks less of herself than I do."

"I am not disputing the fact that she is a perfect character," said John with a grave smile. "But if you will let me finish what I was saying——"

"Make haste; I'm very sleepy."

"Yes; I was going to say that I saw no signs of her giving in to Lady Redcliff. I should say that she made life bearable by holding her own, and having her own way, and I think that in strength of will, positiveness, and so on, she is probably a match for her grandmother. A good thing too. A manageable young woman would be miserable, cowed, a mere slave, in the hands of an old witch like that."

"Oh, as to that, nobody except Uncle Henry could ever manage Theo, and that was just because she was fond of him."

"I thought so. She would be difficult to manage," said Mr. Goodall. "And as she is fond of you, perhaps you will be able to keep her from making friends with these Fanes."

"Don't torment yourself about that," said Helen serenely. "I see nothing so dreadful, after all, in her trying to help the girl."

"Nor should I, if I liked the connection."

"Connection!" said Helen, making a little face. "Well, now you do frighten me. Your young Fane certainly did admire her very much at the wedding—but it was not my fault that he came, remember."

"I quite acknowledge that it was mine," said John, reddening up to his hair. "But look here, Helen, if you see the remotest possibility, your cousin had better go back to her grandmother at once. We must run no risks of that kind."

"You really are actually frightened," said Helen. "My dear, if Mr. Fane chose to be such an idiot, he might as well cry for the moon. The man doesn't exist who is good enough for Theo. Can you look at her face and not see how proud she is, how she would scorn any poor whippersnapper who dared—— One thing, John, please remember—never make a joke on that subject to her. If she understood you she would be very angry."

Mr. Goodall smiled.

"Well, I don't think Fane is a fool," he said, "and she has not much money, which makes it safer, for they are a scheming lot, I suspect. I'm sorry, though, that she has made acquaintance with them. You had better not let it go any farther. I don't want you to go and see them, and she will hardly go by herself, I imagine."

"I can't say what she may do," said Helen.

"I was put out by the sight of those two fellows," he went on after a pause, "and I said one or two things about Litton which I rather regret now. I have no proof of anything against him, and it is unbusinesslike to put one's suspicions into words, as I did to your cousin to-day. I said something about Litton's having been generous with other people's money. It would not do for that to come to his ears—you understand," he said, looking at Helen anxiously.

"What do you mean?" she said, yawning.

"Would it be as well to say to your cousin—in case she should meet Miss Fane again——"

"What enormous caution!" said Helen.

"Speak to her if you like, but I am sure she has forgotten every word you said long ago. And if she remembers it, she is neither wicked nor foolish enough to repeat it."

"Ah, ladies don't always think what they are saying, but I dare say you are right," said the excellent John, a little disconcerted.

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A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIIL. DICK IS REHABILITATED.

POOR Ida having received no answer at all to her letters to Mrs. John asking a contradiction or explanation of this Anastasian scandal, of course argued the worst from this silence. It was hard to think Archie so utterly unworthy, but the evidence against him was overwhelming, and not even Mrs. Pybus could urge anything in extenuation. The girl was supremely wretched.

The pangs of misplaced or hopeless love seem light, little, ludicrous almost, to those who have never felt the wound, and even to those whose wounds of the kind have long been healed. In a retrospect, past pain looks as little as past pleasure looks large. The sun glorifies the clouds which eclipsed him, when he has left them long behind. But of all pains there is none that needs more, and gets less, sympathy in real life than the torment of love betrayed or hopeless. In fiction, in poetry and novels, there is sympathy enough and to spare for it; but in real life, none, or next to none. For the same reason, perhaps, that there is so little sympathy for a toothache—it is not mortal.

"The poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all this time there was not any man died in his own person in a love cause. Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love."

But in these six thousand years how many men have died of mere and sheer pain, mental or bodily? It is no test at all of the intensity of pain that it should or should not be mortal. "Many times death passeth

with less pain than the torture of a limb; for the most vital parts are not the quickest of sense." And so the pangs of love betrayed may not be mortal, for mere pain, however exquisite, does not kill; but no mortal anguish could be more intense and intolerable than this lonely anguish of the heart. And its loneliness is not the least of its wretchedness. It must creep away to hide itself, like a wounded deer, lest its fellows should gore it to death. If it shows itself, it is either smiled at, laughed at, scorned, or scolded. As for sympathy, or pity, or patience even, it must not look for it. And yet we say again—and we are not young, nor in love, nor sentimental—there is no anguish which stands in sorer need of patience, pity, and sympathy, than this of love betrayed.

Poor Ida felt it to the full. She reproached herself with ingratitude, hardness, heartlessness, because she didn't feel Mr. Tuck's death as she should have done, because she had no room in her heart for thoughts of any one but Archie, or of any trouble but her own. Not for Mrs. Tuck's even, who, in her trouble, thought only or chiefly of her—of her loss of fortune. Thus Ida reproached herself, not without reason, for she had shunned even Mrs. Tuck, and shut herself up to brood alone over her wretchedness.

Mrs. Tuck, therefore, on her mission as Dick's ambassador, sought and found her in her room. Ida rose from the sofa on which she had been lying, and admitted her in some confusion and remorse for shutting herself selfishly up with her own sorrow to the forgetfulness of that of Mrs. Tuck.

"I had a bad headache, Mrs. Tuck."

"You need not tell me that, dear; it's in your face. Lie down on the couch, and let me sit a bit with you. There, I'll not

chatter. Let me cool your head with this."

Then Mrs. Tuck proceeded at once "to chatter," approaching her subject indirectly and incidentally, after her wont. First, she said much about her poor dear husband, passing naturally from that to the unsigned will and Ida's disinheritance. Here Ida interrupted her.

"Dear Mrs. Tuck, do not distress yourself about that. I shall be far, far happier doing something for myself. I feel so useless and dependent."

This was an ungracious and unlucky speech, as Ida felt as soon as she had uttered it. Its effect on Mrs. Tuck, in her unnerved state, was unexpected and unhappy. Looking in silence at Ida for a moment with a plaintive and pathetic reproach, she burst at last into tears.

"Oh, Ida," she sobbed, "oh, Ida, even you do not care for me; yet, if you had been my own daughter, I couldn't have loved you more."

"Nor shown me more love," cried Ida, cut to the heart. "How could you think I felt a burden to you? It is to myself I feel a burden," starting into a sitting posture, and taking one of Mrs. Tuck's hands between both of hers.

"There, there, my dear; it's very foolish of me, but I'm a bit unstrung, and so are you, child. You've your own troubles and disappointments, and are out of heart and unhappy. Richard's wretched about you; he says you look so wan and worn. He begged me to look after you, and to express for him his sympathy and anxiety. He can talk of nothing but you. My dear, I never saw such a change in any one in all my life. You know how reserved and cold he seemed, always keeping his feelings so well under that one hardly suspected he had any. It was all pride, Ida, nothing else," nodding emphatically in answer to Ida's perplexed look. "So long as you were an heiress, he feared that others would think—that even you might think—he cared only, or mostly for your fortune, and so his pride froze his manner and his words. But now—My dear Ida, I was never in all my life so surprised as I was a while ago, to hear the way he talked of you, and of his love for you, and of the loss of your fortune setting him free to express his devotion to you. It was plainly an absolute relief to him that you were now poor as himself, except in so far that he couldn't bear to think of your sharing his poverty. Though he knows

you're too noble to break off the engagement on that ground; still, he's very unhappy about it, and he wished me to say to you that he'll work his fingers to the bone to keep you in the position you were born to, and have been used to. He's writing at once to Lord Dewhirst, to ask him for a military appointment he offered him some time since; and he is sanguine about everything, except you, Ida dear. He is tormented with he does not know what fears about your being constant to him. Of course, my dear, I told him that you were the last girl in the world to change your mind through a mere change of circumstances, or to be unmoved by this proof that he loved you only for yourself."

If Mrs. Tuck, who worshipped Dick, had been amazed by this sudden revelation of unsuspected magnanimity and fervour, how much more was Ida, who had never worshipped him! Yet, taking all due discount off Mrs. Tuck's account, there could not be the least doubt that Dick was as eager for the continuance of the engagement as Ida had expected him to be for its dissolution. And her fortune, which she had supposed to be the sole cause of his devotion, had been the cause of the coolness of his devotion! He had divined Ida's suspicion of his mercenariness, and had resented it, or, at least, had been hurt and made half-hearted and reserved by it. How utterly had she misunderstood him—and Archie!

Nevertheless, though he and Archie might almost change places in her mind, they could not in her heart—an irrational organ moved solely by a blind and obstinate instinct of its own. Now, however, she could not, if she would, go by its discredited guidance. If it had been difficult before, it was simply impossible now to recede from her engagement. Yet she had reckoned so certainly on her release from it, that Dick's unlooked-for constancy was the most bitter of disappointments to her.

Thinking these things, she was silent for a moment, and said then:

"He's very generous."

"I knew you'd think so; I said you'd think so," cried Mrs. Tuck triumphantly. "Why should you recede from the engagement because you found he cared only for yourself? But he has got some idea into his head that you were born to be a duchess, and that it's selfish and cruel to ask you to become a poor man's wife. That was why he was so eager to persuade

my poor dear husband to settle the sum he promised upon you. You thought he was a little too eager about it, and so did I, dear; but it was of you, not of himself, he was thinking. He wanted to have a home worthy of you, and he means yet to make one worthy of you. He says he's got something now to live for and to work for, if he may hope still for your hand. He may, dear, mayn't he? He was so anxious and wretched about it that I promised to bring him your answer; for, of course, he couldn't speak to you himself on the subject so soon after my poor dear husband's death."

Thus Mrs. Tuck expanded Dick's case, unconsciously almost, for her mind was like a lens which magnifies all that passes through it. She could not repeat the simplest trifle without exaggeration. Having extorted from Ida an assurance—given not over fervently—that she held to the engagement, Mrs. Tuck hurried away, as though on a life and death mission, to revive with it Dick's despairing soul.

Meanwhile, Ida, more wretched now than ever, wondered over this revelation of Dick's true character. How mistaken she had been, how uncharitable—inexcusably uncharitable, for had he not shown himself heroically unselfish in interposing his life between her and the most frightful of all deaths? Yet she had imagined him selfish, cynical, heartless, mercenary! And Archie, whom she had imagined to be all that was generous and noble, had proved to be——was it proved? Here the heroic Dick was forgotten, and the base Archie was alone in all her thoughts, so perverse, blind, and unreasoning is a woman's heart.

Next day, Dick, getting Ida to himself, followed up his aunt's attack with much spirit and success. He laid the state of affairs before her—at least, as they looked to him from his peculiar standpoint. He explained how his embarrassments were due to his trustfulness, and to the treachery and trickery of others. Men whose fortunes he had made by his recommendations turned upon him suddenly when he least expected, and was least prepared for it. He then tried to convey to her some idea of the diabolical nature of creditors—creatures who solicited and received endless favours from you in your prosperity, and waited for the day of your adversity to repay you by insolence and extortion. Thence Dick diverged to explain the cause which left him at the mercy of such

creatures. It seems that he had got no rent from his Irish estates for three years, and yet he had to pay all the charges upon them promptly and in full. However, there was some prospect of the Government voting a sum for the purchase of his property to resell to peasant proprietors, and then all would once more be well with him. Dick spoke as if his estate alone was under consideration for purchase by the Government, and as if the transaction was of a nature not less stupendous than that of the purchase of the Suez Canal shares.

It is true that Dick had Irish tenants who were in arrear; but their holdings were not of such importance as to attract the special attention of the Government, or to strain British credit in an effort to raise a loan for their redemption. The rent (and it was a rack rent) due from them amounted altogether to forty-four pounds a year; and the charges which Dick had to pay promptly and in full were a ground rent of one pound twelve shillings.

If, however, the Government shrank from this great measure, which—such was his luck—was highly probable, then, he feared, there was nothing for it but bankruptcy. Bankruptcy, Dick vaguely described as a barbarous and brutal institution of this nation of shopkeepers, by which men were not ashamed to wring from their wretched debtors sixpence in the pound even if they could get no more. From himself, for instance, so hardly was he driven and dealt with, they were not likely to get more, if so much.

Whether Dick absolutely persuaded himself or not, he certainly succeeded in persuading Ida, that this was a very grievous hardship, not to the creditors, but to the debtor. But then his description of the process of bankruptcy was rather confused and confusing.

Having thus frankly confessed all the shortcomings of others in their dealings with himself, and pathetically described the difficulties and distresses into which they had betrayed him, Dick proceeded to paint in glowing colours his plans and prospects for the future. He had hesitated at first between accepting Lord Silsden's Irish agency of one thousand two hundred pounds a year, and the adjutancy pressed upon him by Lord Dewhurst of six hundred pounds a year. The Irish agency looked more, but in the long run the adjutancy was worth more; since Lord Silsden could never run an agent longer than three years on an

average—the last was shot within sixteen months of his appointment. Taking, therefore, rather ten years than one year as a prudent basis of his calculations, he had concluded that he would pocket more money in that time as an adjutant at six hundred pounds a year than as a perishable agent at one thousand two hundred pounds. He would, then, write that very lay to Lord Dewhirst about the adjutancy if Ida approved.

Ida, thus identified with him, had to murmur her approval. Then Dick apologised for broaching such matters so soon after poor Mr. Tuck's death; but he didn't like to let this offer of the adjutancy lapse, and of course he couldn't accept it without consulting her. If Ida had succeeded to Mr. Tuck's three thousand pounds a year, Dick's manner couldn't have been more deferential—reverential. In taking leave (for he still virtually lived at Ryecote because of the tiresome Bompas business) he said, while he held and pressed her hand sympathetically:

"I do not regret at all for my own sake the way in which Mr. Tuck has left his affairs; I am rather relieved by it—rejoiced at it for some things—for one thing; but for your sake, Ida, I am sorry—sincerely sorry, dear." Whereon he kissed her calmly, and departed.

Ida had now come back to the idea of Dick's nobleness from which she had gradually and remorsefully receded for months past. How she could ever have doubted it she could hardly now conceive. A man who saved her life at such frightful risk of his own! And just because his manner was cold and cynical, and because he allowed his aunt to pet him (since petting him was the pleasure of her life), she had come to think him selfish, heartless, and mercenary. Mercenary! Why, he absolutely rejoiced to think her penniless! And what was this story he had just told her?

There was much of it she didn't clearly understand, for with becoming modesty and true dignity he gave no names and entered into no details. But this at least was clear,—he had been very ill-used, and ill-used by those to whom he had been most generous, whose fortunes he had made, whose— But had she a right to denounce them? Who had shown him such ingratitude as she herself, whose life he had saved? How sordidly had she judged him, imagining that he valued her only for the sake of her fortune, while really he valued money only for her sake!

TWO COURT POETS.

If we might be permitted to parody Dryden's old and excellent epigram on Homer, Virgil, and Milton, we might say, with a difference, that "two poets in two different ages born, the courts of two gay monarchs did adorn." The first was Thomas, commonly called "Tom D'Urfey," who flourished in the reign of Charles the Second, and was admitted to the close intimacy, if not to the actual friendship, of that easy-going potentate; and Captain Charles Morris, of the Life Guards, who was for many years the poet-laureate and president of the Beefsteak Club, and the boon-companion of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Fourth. A short account of both of these once celebrated rhymers, whose works have long since fallen into oblivion, may not be uninteresting, as a contribution to the history of the convivial manners of high society in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Thomas D'Urfey was of French extraction, as appears from the verses addressed to him by the scurrilous "Tom" Brown, who infested literature in the days of Queen Anne:

Thou cur, half French, half English breed,
Thou mongrel of Parnassus!

He was born in Exeter, in 1649, of respectable parents, who destined him for the profession of the law. As he grew to the proper age, he found that he had no love for the legal studies that were necessary to qualify him for success as an attorney, and that an unlucky impediment in his speech deprived him of all hope of distinguishing himself at the bar. He was, however, in possession of a small patrimony which enabled him to pay his way in the world without the necessity of earning his daily bread, and in his youth, having nothing better to do, he took to writing verses to the ladies with whom he flirted, and in making himself agreeable generally to the society of the rich and powerful, to which he managed to gain admittance. He not only wrote songs to old and popular melodies, but he sang them—an accomplishment which was not affected by the stutter or stammer, which only afflicted him in conversation. The same "Tom" Brown who reviled at his parentage railed also at the impediment in his speech, and in his *New Maxims of Conversation*, alluding to him under the name of Chaerilus, said: "There's nothing like

bearing an injury or a jest heroically. 'The town,' says Chaerilus 'may d-d-d-damn me for a poet, but they s-s-s-sing my songs for all that.' He was about seven-and-twenty years of age, known in London society as an agreeable man about town, and noted for his wit, when he produced a comedy called *The Fond Husband*; or, the *Plotting Sisters*. The play met with a decided success, and so pleased King Charles the Second, that he attended the performance during three successive nights. D'Urfe does not appear to have been personally known to the king until this time, but the popularity of the comedy, and the amusement which Charles found in it, caused him to express a wish to make the acquaintance of the author. D'Urfe was therefore formally introduced to the Merry Monarch. The king was nearly twenty years his senior, but was as youthful in his pleasures and his vices as his younger companion. His majesty was exceedingly fond of music, which he had studied in the days of his exile, and in which he was more or less proficient. "The king," says Mr. Chappell in his *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, "knew enough of music to take his part in any easy composition, and, after his restoration, would sometimes sing duets with 'that stupendous base,' Mr. Gostling, of the Chapel Royal, the Duke of York, afterwards James the Second, accompanying them on the guitar. The Hon. Roger North says that Charles 'was a professed lover of music, but of the dancing kind only, and had an utter detestation of fancies,' or other compositions in the fugal style; and, not the less so, from an unsuccessful entertainment of that kind given him by Secretary Williamson," after which the secretary had no peace, for the king, as his way was, could not forbear whetting his wit upon the subject of the fancy music, and its patron the secretary. He would not allow the matter to be disputed upon the point of meliority, but ran all down by saying, 'Have I not ears!' He could not bear any music to which he could not keep time, and that he constantly did to all that was presented to him; and, for the most part, heard it standing. Pepys described him as beating time with his hand 'all along the anthem,' in the Chapel Royal, and Dr. Tudway accuses the young composers of his chapel of having so far given way to the king's French taste, as to introduce dancing movements and theatrical corantos into their anthems."

Charles established a private orchestra

composed of four-and-twenty fiddlers, and at the after-dinner performances of this band, that cost him or the nation between one thousand five hundred to two thousand pounds per annum in salaries to the artists, D'Urfe was a constant attendant. He speedily grew into such high favour, that he not only sang to the king, but sang with him. They often held the music-sheet between them, as they stood side by side before the courtly company of ladies and gentlemen, in whose society the king was accustomed to pass a portion of the evening. D'Urfe often accompanied the king in his afternoon peregrinations in the Mall of the St. James's Park, walking arm in arm with him, and his dogs and some of his courtiers following behind. Wherever the king went, D'Urfe was engaged to sing to him, or otherwise to entertain him, whether at Windsor, at Newmarket, at Winchester, or at the houses of the nobility to which he was invited. In the five collections of the songs which D'Urfe issued from time to time during the king's life, most of which were re-issued with the coarse title—though not coarse to that age—of *Laugh and Grow Fat, or Pills to Purge Melancholy*, many of them are marked as having been "sung to the king." Until the year 1685, when Charles died of an apoplectic stroke, in his fifty-sixth year, D'Urfe never lost the king's favour; which, however, took no more substantial form than that of a smile, a word of welcome, an invitation to supper or to a drinking-bout, though possibly he might have made his favourite a lord or even a duke, if the favourite had been unwise enough to wish it.

After the king's death D'Urfe still maintained a connection, though less intimate, with the Court, and wrote and sang songs to please King James the Second, who was not quite so convivial, but almost as dissolute a person as his predecessor. Indeed, it appears, on the authority of D'Urfe himself, in the preface to his collected "*Pills*," that his favour as a Court singer extended still farther than the reign of James the Second, for he boasts that "he performed some of his own things before their Majesties King Charles the Second, King James, King William, Queen Mary, Queen Anne, and Prince George of Denmark, and never quitted the royal presence without happy and commendable approbation." He did not, however, inform the world whether the happy approbation was strengthened by

golden guineas. There was a report current, however, that Queen Anne gave him fifty guineas for writing and singing to her a satirical song on the Princess Sophia, Electress and Duchess Dowager of Hanover, the mother of King George the First. At the time the verses were written, the princess was eighty years of age, and next heir to the British throne, a circumstance which did not recommend her to the love or good opinion of the actual sovereign.

The crown's far too weighty,
For shoulders of eighty,
She could not sustain such a trophy.
Her hand, too, already
Has grown so unsteady,
She can't hold a sceptre,
So Providence kept her
Away from old Dowager Sophy.

This vile doggerel, written in the vilest taste, or want of taste, turning into vulgar ridicule the physical infirmities of a venerable lady, was almost as discreditable to the Queen who paid for it, as to the venal scribe who wrote it, and is only cited as a specimen of D'Urfey's so-called talents, and the uses to which he applied them. It must be said, however, for Tom D'Urfey, that in despite of his literary demerits, he must have possessed personal good qualities and amiable traits of character, to have induced such eminent contemporaries as Pope, Steele, and Addison to speak as kindly of him as they did. Pope, in a letter dated the 10th of April, 1710, when D'Urfey was in his sixty-first year, thus wrote of him :

"I have not quoted one Latin author since I came down, but have learned without book a song of Mr. Thomas D'Urfey's, who is your only poet of tolerable reputation in this country. He makes all the merriment in our entertainments, and but for him there would be so miserable a dearth of catches, that I fear they would put either the parson or me upon making some for 'em. Any man of any quality is heartily welcome to the best topeing-table of our gentry, who can roar out some rhapsodies of his works . . . Alas, sir, neither you with your Ovid, nor I with my Statius, can amuse a whole board of justices and extraordinary squires, or gain one hum of approbation or laugh of admiration. 'These things,' they would say, 'are too studious; they may do well enough with such as love reading, but give us your ancient poet, Mr. D'Urfey.'"

Three years later, when the guineas of the Queen, and all other patrons and patronesses of his muse, had ceased to flow into his empty coffers, a generous notice of him, written by Addison, appeared in Number

Sixty-seven of the *Guardian*, under date of May 28th, 1713. This article, otherwise remarkable, was the first ever contributed to that journal by its celebrated author. Addison, with an excess of good-nature only to be excused in so eminent a critic by the fact that D'Urfey was in distress, and that a little extra warmth of praise from so distinguished a man was calculated to enlist the public in his favour, compared him to Pindar. He spoke of D'Urfey as an old man, though he was but sixty-four, and remarked that "curious observers had often noted that poets were generally long-lived, and ran beyond the usual age of man, if not cut off by some accident or excess, as Anacreon was, in the midst of a very merry old age, when he was choked by a grape-stone. Our countryman, Mr. D'Urfey," he added, "is still living, and in a blooming old age, that still promises many musical productions, for, if I am not mistaken, our British swan will sing to the last. I lately received a visit from my good old friend and contemporary. As we both flourished together in King Charles the Second's reign, we diverted ourselves with the remembrance of several particulars that passed in the world before the greater part of our readers were born, and could not but smile to think how insensibly we were grown into a couple of venerable old gentlemen. Tom observed to me that, after having written more odes than Horace, and about four times as many comedies as Terence, he was reduced to great difficulties by the importunities of a set of men (his creditors) who had of late years furnished him with the accommodation, and would not, as he said, be paid with a song." Under the circumstances Addison suggested a theatrical benefit on his behalf, and the reproduction of his first play, *The Plotting Sisters*, which had so greatly pleased King Charles the Second. He lost no time in carrying out the project, and "in order to extricate his old friend, immediately sent for three directors of the playhouse, and desired them thus in their turn: Do a good office for a man who, in Shakespeare's phrase, had often filled their mouths, meaning, with pleasantry and conceits." The benefit was fixed for the 18th of June ensuing; a period of three weeks being allowed for the necessary preparations, and the due manipulation of the multifarious agents of publicity. On the morning of the performance, Sir Richard Steele, also writing in the *Guardian*, followed up the work begun by Addison,

and concluded an article in favour of the play, and of the play-writer, by stating "that his friend had in *The Plotting Sisters* shown himself a master, and made not only the characters of the play, but the furniture of the house contribute to the main design. He has made excellent use of a table with a carpet, and the key of a closet. With these two implements, which would perhaps have been overlooked by an ordinary writer, he has contrived the most natural perplexities that ever were presented on the stage. . . . The characters in this play cannot choose but make it a very pleasant entertainment, and the decorating of singing and dancing will more than repay the good-nature of those who make an honest man a visit of two merry hours, to make his following year unpainful."

All the actors and managers entered cordially into the project; the public was favourably inclined; the house was well attended, and the result was a pecuniary success. But there were still ten years of life left to Tom D'Urfey, who, having either squandered or otherwise lost his small patrimony, was often reduced to sore straits to pay his butcher and his baker. The comparative favour bestowed upon him by Queen Anne was not continued into the reign of George the First. He had not only written scurrilously of the King's mother, but he had lost his power to please, and had no longer the health, the spirits, or the voice to set the table in a roar, or to play the part of a professed wit and punster. He had, moreover, outlived his popularity, and the grandsons of the men of King Charles's time neither sang his songs nor even knew his name. He lingered in obscurity, in poverty, and, it is supposed, in penury, until 1723, when he died, and was buried in the churchyard of St. James's, Piccadilly, where a stone was put up, with the inscription, "Tom D'Urfey. Dyed February ye 26th, 1723." An epigram—called an "epitaph"—upon him was published three years afterwards in "*Miscellaneous Poems by Several Hands*," in which his age is represented as seventy only, and in which also he is accused of "great thirst"—a failing, however, which was very common in that age and for more than a hundred years afterwards:

Here lies the Lyric, who with tale and song
Did life to three score years and ten prolong.
His tales were pleasant, and his song was sweet,
His heart was cheerful, but his thirst was great.
Grieve, reader, grieve, that he too soon grew old!
His song has ended, and his tale is told.

Of the many songs written by D'Urfey, two only have retained their popularity—*The Brave Men of Kent*, and *In Summer Time When Flowers Do Spring*. A still greater favourite than either of these, *Dame Durden*, is sometimes erroneously attributed to D'Urfey, from its marked resemblance to his style of writing; but the author remains unknown. Had it been written by D'Urfey he would most assuredly have claimed it, for bashfulness and want of belief in himself were not among his virtues—or his faults.

Charles Morris was born in 1746—the year of the battle of Culloden—in the twentieth of the reign of George the Second, and entered the army about 1766 or 1767, having had interest enough to procure a subaltern's commission in the then, as now, fashionable regiment of Life Guards. But he was no warrior. The military life had no attractions for him, except that his commission in a fashionable regiment procured him a facile entrance into the good society to which he might not, perhaps, have been otherwise able to attain. He was still in early manhood when he retired from the service with the rank and the half-pay of a captain, and devoted the remainder of his long life to the convivialities of the very "fast" and highly-aristocratic circles of which the Prince of Wales was the predominant spirit. Captain Morris was a true Sybarite—taking life easily—finding his chief pleasure in eating, drinking, talking, or rather scandal-mongering, in writing inferior songs in prosaic phraseology, and singing them willingly with a powerful voice and in a pleasing manner. His aristocratic boon companions only asked to be amused, and cared little for the character of the amusement, provided they could be made to laugh, or perhaps only to languidly smile at such entertainments as the buffoons and punsters were pleased to afford them. The chief haunts of Captain Morris were the Beefsteak and Dilettanti Clubs, to both of which the Prince of Wales was a frequent visitor. These clubs were not on the model of those of the present time. The members were not lodged in palaces which they frequented only to read the newspaper, to play whist or billiards occasionally, and to dine most commonly alone, but social clubs for gentlemen, where the members principally met to dine at one table, and to drink far more than was good for them. To give toasts, often coarse, always free, and sometimes harmlessly sentimental; to

make speeches, to pass around the bottle, and either to sing songs or to listen to them, were the amusements of the members, often prolonged from the dinner-hour to the dawn of the following morning, when possibly one-half of the "jolly companions" had to be led home to beds which they were too often unable to reach without assistance. In addition to the Beefsteak Club and the Dilettanti, held at the Star and Garter, the old tavern that stood somewhere near the site of the Athenæum, the Travellers, and the Reform Clubs of our day, the prince established a third convivial society, under the title of the "Je ne sais quoi" Club. In celebration of its first meeting the captain wrote a silly song in sixteen stanzas, of which the two following may serve as samples. They are neither better nor worse than scores of others with which the too facile scribbler amused or possibly bored his contemporaries. In those days such wretched stuff was accepted as poetry, by the good-natured idlers of the town.

In all the blest commerce of friendship or love,
In the court or the cottage, the world or the grove,
In all countries or ages that man ever saw,
The soul's sweet attraction, the Je ne sais quoi.

For our rites a new tutelard god we've in view,
Neither Egypt, nor Athens, nor Rome ever knew,
As a sacred libation we'll pour out with awe,
On the altar of Bacchus, the Je ne sais quoi.

With such verses as these, of which the captain could produce unlimited quantities, and with which he has filled two volumes, first published in 1840, under the title of *Lyra Urbanica*, the members of the three clubs that were favoured by the Prince of Wales, were entertained every evening, whichever of the clubs held revel. The captain had a good voice, and he made the most and the best of it. He was always willing, if not anxious to sing, and managed to please his not too fastidious or critical listeners by his invariable good-humour and contagious cheerfulness. In a note to his lines in celebration of the election of the Prince of Wales to the honours of the Beefsteak Club, the captain describes himself as "the father of the fold," or the oldest member. In that character he undertook to chant the praises of beef as an article of diet.

While thus we boast a general creed
In honour of our shrine, sir,
You'll find the world long since agreed
That beef is food divine, sir.
And British fame still tells afar,
This truth where'er she wanders,
For wine, for women, and for war,
Beefsteaks make Alexanders.

His "muse," as the gallant captain

always dubs his fearful propensity for writing bad verses, was wholly a pagan one, and like that of Anacreon, had but two topics—those of love and wine, Venus and Bacchus, with an occasional allusion to the friendship formed at the convivial board by the agencies of the bottle. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," was the whole sum and substance of his philosophy, if such it can be called. He was nothing if not a toper, and a three-bottle man, though he was never known to be intoxicated. "Dum vivimus vivamus" continued to be the burden of his song, until he ceased writing, or, as he modestly but not inappropriately called it, "scrawling," at about the age of ninety. In the preface to *Lyra Urbanica* he wrote, and the passage is only quoted as a specimen alike of his philosophy and his English:

"It will be seen that the words 'wisdom' and 'reason' are often placed in these pieces under the jest of the muse. I beg therefore to observe that by these words I do not mean the sound perfection of the understanding, or that just and moral excellence which makes at once the worth and glory of the human mind, but that affected sage formality and disheartening monitory dulness which the sour and saturnine moralist is ever opposing to mirth and recreation. As it will be seen, perhaps, that I make the quickening inspiration of wine the awakening cause of the heart's worthiest emotions and sweetest gratifications, I must here, in vindication, remark that it is from a wish to give the pensive, gloomy, world-worn breast a more gay and vivid perception of the fair side of human condition, and awaken it to a brighter aspect of nature, that I recommend the depressed spirit a sip in the care-repelling fountain, but not to dim the brightness produced from the sparkling drop by the heavy clouds of intemperate stupidity."

When the Prince of Wales succeeded to the throne on the death of his father, the captain thought it his duty, as the laureate of the Beefsteak Club, and of the Je ne sais quoi, to celebrate the event in characteristic verse, which he did in the following style:

Fame, ever on wing to mark worth far and near,
With her proud list in hand flew in ecstasy here,
In haste Immortality's volume unfurled
And stamp'd the great name that hath rescued
the world.

George the Fourth, of Great Britain, whose wise
ordered Plan
Redeemed the lost blessings of earth and of man.

In the last stanza of the eight of which

this egregious ode is compounded, the captain celebrates the final defeat of the great Napoleon by the agency of George the Fourth—who, when a little the worse for his too copious indulgence in old port and Madeira, at the symposia of the Beefsteak Club, sometimes imagined and boasted that he had been present at the battle of Waterloo—

Rise, and fill to my toast, and this darling of
Fame,
Who restored to the world its great order and
frame,
Whose firm British virtue still braved the storm's
blast,
Till he brought to his feet the world's tyrant at
last.
George the Fourth, of Great Britain, whose wise
ordered plan
Redeemed the lost blessings of earth and of man.

When this inspired effusion, of which the captain is said to have been unusually proud, proceeded from his pen, he was in the seventy-fifth year of his age, and the light of his never very brilliant fame had become dimmed, either by the lapse of time, or by the fumes and vapours of the bottle. But it was neither the worst nor the last of the compositions with which he favoured the small, though highly-appreciative public of the three clubs that he frequented. Though George the Fourth knew him so well, William the Fourth knew him not at all—a fact which he deplored when he finally, under the pressure of advancing years, left London for the country, in a “scrawl,” which he entitled *My Adieu to the Town*:

Well, here's a parting cup !
Adieu to London town.
One king set me up,
’Tother king knocked me down.
With one I laughed and played,
With ’tother I sob and sigh.

At this period of his life, he wrote of himself apparently with much truth and candour:

I am an old bacchanal quite worn out,
Once leader of men a jolly bout ;
But the game's all up, and the show's gone by,
And now an old bore and a twaddle am I.

He records that when on the verge of ninety years of age, an earnest request was sent to him from the members of the Beefsteak Club that he would appear once more amongst them before he quitted the world. He complied with the request, and as usual let off a song in commemoration of the event. He finally retired to Brockham, in Surrey, a little village on the banks of the Mole, where he died in the ninety-third year of his age.

Thus lived and thus died an epicurean of the nineteenth century, after an eminently

pleasant and eminently useless existence prolonged for nearly a quarter of a century beyond the scripturally allotted period of three score and ten. No doubt an adequate income, a more than adequate stomach, and an extraordinarily good constitution enabled the gallant and gay captain to gain so striking a victory over Time. In addition to the three great advantages we have just enumerated, the captain possessed an equable temper, and never allowed troubles of any kind to ruffle its serenity. He made the best of everything, took disappointment calmly and easily, and had his reward, if reward it were, in a long life, to which any serious trouble was a stranger. Of the many rhymed effusions with which he flooded the small social world of which he was a member, one only has reached our times, remembered for one quotable line, and one only:

In town let me live, then, in town let me die,
For in truth I can't relish the country, not I ;
If one must have a villa in summer to dwell,
Oh give me the sweet, shady side of Pall Mall.

This is but poor stuff, though the last line is often cited by people who know nothing whatever of its author.

Of the court poets—one the favourite of Charles the Second, the other of George the Fourth—the favourite of Charles was incomparably the better man and the better poet. Tom D'Urfey's pretty little song, *In Summer Time When Flowers Do Spring*—which deservedly finds a place in every collection of English lyrics—is worth more than all that the gay Captain Morris ever perpetrated in the two volumes which he has given to a world, which has been by no means grateful for the gift.

AN INDUSTRIAL HOME.

ONE of the great problems of modern life is, What to do with the boys? and although it is quite possible that the sister problem, What shall we do with our girls? presents as many difficulties for solution, yet this last does not come in our way at present in any crying manner. The girls are more patient, they are not so constantly in evidence as the boys, who, if not always kept occupied in work or in play, are sure to fall into that Satanic mischief which Dr. Watts, as well as our individual experience, assures us is constantly provided “for idle hands to do.”

Just now we had with us boys of every

grade and class. The streets were swarming with those home from the holidays, the smart little public-schoolboys, with their clean collars, and tall hats, and superbly mannish expression of countenance; the blue-coat boys, whom use has inured to their yellow stockings; the less pronounced young gentlemen from Dr. Birch's academy; the decayed victualler's boys; and the youths from the Ancient Buffaloes' School. In addition to all these, more or less visitors and guests, there were the swarms of boys from the national and board schools, who employed their vacation mostly in traversing the streets in little bands, making a kind of rough music on the area railings of their wealthier neighbours, while speculating as to what those neighbours were in the way of having cooked for luncheon or dinner, or perhaps stonily watching, with allowable envy, the snug parties of little folk assembling in cheerful rooms bright with fires and lights, and gay with enviable toys. And besides all these we have still to deal with the real nomads of the town, the bands of wild and wandering Bedouins of the streets.

In the dusk of evening these wandering bands may be met with, flitting about open spaces, and especially about morsels of waste land crossed by railway-arches, which last afford rare advantages in the way of evading policemen. A fire is built in some sheltered corner, and the little gang of boys crouches and clusters about it, while they share among them, perhaps, the proceeds of some petty pilfering expedition directed against the shopkeepers of the neighbourhood. When the weather is warm and dry, the open arches afford sufficient shelter for the night; at other times there are stables and shops, or rag-pickers' stores, where it is easy to find a corner in which to curl up and sleep; or if fortune has been propitious, and a few pence have been earnt by a casual job of any kind, the luxury of the "kip," or common lodging-house, is attainable, with its kitchen full of warmth, and flavour, and company.

Few of these wandering boys are absolutely homeless. They are mostly "bad boys" who have quarrelled with parental control, often enough with a wild energy about them that makes restraint insupportable. It would be unjust perhaps to blame the parents of such children for their want of influence over them, for what a child learns from the world outside, it grasps and believes in, far more than any teaching of its parents; and the atmosphere of

the world in which these little waifs are brought up, is not one of self-restraint or self-control. And a costermonger, who has to keep up a perpetual fight for his living, but who has so far earnt it honestly, may feel aggrieved with the direction of affairs in general if his son takes to evil courses, but it is difficult to see how he can help it. "He hadn't ought to be such a bad one," alleged the father of a boy against whom some delinquency had been brought home. "All his brothers have turned out well, and this one had the stick more than any of them." And there is reason in the plea; the man had followed the traditions of his class in the bringing up of his boys, and what else could he have done?

It is quite possible that one of these wandering boys may escape all the perils that threaten to cut short his career of freedom; he may successfully evade both policeman and board-school inspector—neither of which functionaries perhaps is very anxious to have him in his hands—until he has reached the age when he can neither be sent to an industrial school as a truant, or to a reformatory as a youthful offender; and in that case he probably develops into the prowling rough, incapable of any sustained labour, and driven to provide for his daily wants by various immoral and unlawful expedients. But happily the chances are that sooner or later the wild urchin is caught, very happily for him if without stain of crime. Perhaps some active official hauls him up before the magistrate, who may, under recent legislation, on proof that he associates with bad characters, order him to be sent to an industrial school. Or he may have haply got upon the list of the school-board officer, and be brought up as an incorrigible truant, with the same result. In a third case the boy may have relations or neighbours anxious to reclaim him, or come under the notice of some philanthropist, and then, although probably with considerable difficulty, a place may be found for him as a voluntary inmate of an industrial school.

And after? What becomes of our little scapegrace, after the door of the industrial school has once opened to admit him, sullen and mutinous, and yet with his little heart quaking and trembling within him, as some small nestling in the hand of stern humanity?

The process of moulding these little waifs and strays into decent members of society is being energetically carried on in

many directions. Altogether in England and Wales there exist some two hundred schools of this type, sixty-four of which are reformatory schools for boys who have been convicted of petty offences, and a hundred and thirty-six industrial schools where boys who have no such blot upon their characters are received and trained. And these vary in size from Feltham, with seven hundred and twenty boys, to cottage homes, where only twenty or thirty are taken. On the whole it strikes us that these schools with moderate numbers are likely to be more successful than those huge establishments, where an inflexible routine takes the place of more direct human influence. But wherever the boy may be sent, it is pretty certain that he will soon catch the spirit of the boys by whom he is surrounded, and that, if this spirit be bright and good, half the work of training is accomplished. Only this spirit is one that cannot be had ready-made; it is the result of long, painstaking effort on the part of the ruling intelligence that directs the school.

Now, on the chance of meeting with our little Arab once more, let us visit the Boys' Home in Regent's Park Road, which is just a stone's-throw from the Chalk Farm Station, that has an almost antique flavour about it among railway-stations, with memories of the days when railways were jealously excluded from the heart of London, and when the great cutting through Camden Town was regarded as a wonder of engineering skill. And here on the rising ground the air seems fresher and purer than elsewhere; and there is Primrose Hill, with its sweep of green-sward, a little morsel of primeval country surrounded by the great desert of houses.

The building we are looking out for does not strike the eye by any magnificence in its proportions, it might indeed be passed unnoticed unless looked for; a three-cornered block of houses, intended for shops, no doubt, originally, but with the shop-fronts all run into one, and the backs of little boys dimly to be discerned through the frosted glass. At the entrance is a little industrial exposition, consisting of the various articles which the boys have had a hand in making: the tables, the lounging-chairs, the bookstands, all of which are solid and workmanlike in make. The superintendent leads the way, and passing through a swing-door, we are at once in the workroom, in the midst of the boys—the full lengths of the boys whose

backs we have just before dimly seen through the glass—little boys who are stitching away merrily, like elves in the fairy tale. At one end, on the regular tailor's board, a bluff, good-humoured looking journeyman—or perhaps he is a master, but, anyhow, looking portentously large among these little folk—sits cross-legged, after the manner of tailors, while several elder youths, cross-legged also on the same shop-board, represent the skilled element in the workshop. These elder boys are apprentices regularly bound to the business, while below, on the general level, stand and sit the rest of the elves, who are patching, piecing, darning, sewing on buttons, and stitching up rents, all under the eye of a pleasant-looking matron, and under the direct superintendence of a fine sandy cat, who blinks knowingly over the scene. Here are warmth, cheerfulness, human society, and human interests, while the dull grey light from outside, and the sudden clatter of rain against the window-panes, marks the contrast between life here and in the street outside.

In the comfortable and perhaps luxurious homes of the wealthier classes, where the same contrast often presents itself in still greater force between the comfort within and the want outside, the thought sometimes intrudes, how precarious is all this brightness and pleasantness of existence, all depending, perhaps, on one feeble human life, or on social conditions that may change at any moment! But here in this workshop there is a feeling of solidity. These tailor-boys, with ordinary good conduct, will be able to make a living for themselves anywhere. The boys, indeed, cannot all be tailors, but they all will attain sufficient skill to patch and repair their own clothes, and that is an accomplishment which will stand them in good stead in any part of the world in which they may be thrown.

But to pass into the room beyond, where you may fancy that all the boys are having a game of hunt-the-slipper, with the accompaniment of "Cobbler, cobbler, mend my shoe, get it done by half-past two." In reality everything is perfectly quiet, but the spirit of the strain seems to have got into the boys' elbows, as they work away busily, hammering, stitching, and thumping. Here, too, are the same gradations of rank as in the tailor's shop—the skilled shoemaker, a master of his craft, the three or four apprentices, who are learning the business thoroughly, and the younger boys

who, anyhow, learn to cobble, and may be apprenticed themselves by-and-by with good conduct.

There are boys who have a turn for tailoring and shoemaking, but for the great majority it seems that the cherished aspiration is towards carpentering. A healthy sign, surely, which shows that, after all, the wandering boy of the streets shares the general nature of boys under happier conditions. For what can be more delightful to the average boy than the making of shavings and chips—what music pleasanter than the swish of the plane and the hoarse voice of the saw?

These are the sounds that greet the ear as we enter the carpenter's workshop, which is truly a boys' bower of pleasure, with its fresh smell of deals and shavings, and the evidence of skill and craft in the disjointed members of chairs and tables, in the frameworks of cases and fittings, of horses too, whether for hanging clothes upon or for prancing upon nursery floors. Here the head carpenter presides at the bench, scrutinising joints and dovetails with a calm and quiet eye, while the apprentices are at work with chisel and saw, and other boys are helping with a due sense of the importance of their work. Now these apprentices, it is satisfactory to learn, have no difficulty when out of their time in getting remunerative employment. But then, of all the lads who aspire to be carpenters, only a few can be chosen. There must be a natural aptitude of hand and eye, or the best training will not produce a good carpenter. And then there is a limit soon reached in the work which can be provided for the carpenter's shop; for while the little tailors find abundant occupation in making and mending the clothes of the whole establishment of boys, and the shoemaker-elves in making shoes for themselves and their comrades, yet the home has no such constant demand for chairs and tables, and hence for work for its carpenters it must rely upon demand from the outside. And in this way people might help the home without any sacrifice on their own part—that is, by purchasing some of the many articles of use or ornament which are made on the premises, and thus with a brisk demand more lads might be able to enter this pleasant and useful career.

But there is a more rough and ready workshop down below in the basement, where every boy's instinct for cutting and chopping may have full range for its

exercise. This is the firewood shop, with a handsome gas-engine at work at one end, working easily without noise or fuss, and driving a circular saw, which, under the management of an elder boy, is sawing up planks of wood into firewood lengths. A peculiar industry this, and one confined chiefly to London itself. Other great cities manage to light their fires with waste wood of various kinds, but the London housewife is firmly wedded to the neat little bundles of split deal, all of the same length, and very much of the same model. A very little experience in lighting London fires will make you familiar with the exact mould of each particular form, and you wonder how the makers manage to get the same shaped bits into each bundle. Now these bundles of firewood are of such constant demand, that a circulating medium might almost be made of them, like the brick tea of Mongolia. And thus the managers of these homes find in the cutting of firewood a safe and fairly remunerative occupation, which enables them to keep all their little hands employed without glutting the market. And the very smallest boys can help at this; and so this firewood shop is full of life and energy, the gas-engine setting the pace of the work, which keeps them all in motion, although, perhaps, each pair of bright eyes is fixed upon the stranger who enters, in questioning intentness.

Now that we have got a good number of these boys together, we may notice that they are all of the general type of London boys, as like as so many peas, you would say, only that is always the impression when a number of the same tribe of men are seen together. But almost all the boys have the sallow London faces, the dark lank hair—the type of feature that seems to make its appearance in a single generation of London life, and that, curiously enough, seems to revert rather to Celtic than Saxon models. Sharp as needles, too, you would say of most of them, and in that way able to “walk round” the stately youths of the upper-class schools; of an excellent type indeed for making their way in the world, if the chaplain and masters can provide them with sufficient ballast in the way of a due knowledge of right and wrong.

At any rate it is comforting to find that these boys drawn from the London streets, and coming here, many of them, with the reputation of being completely incorrigible, rarely give any difficulty when they are once within the influence of the school.

They find something to do, something useful that they can see the good of, and they do it. They find discipline—which they can understand and enter into readily—a semi-military organisation in companies and squads, which flatters their self-respect, and they find a system under which each boy fares well or ill, according to his diligence and good conduct.

In the same way the report of their physical condition is encouraging. The boys as they enter, are perhaps backward in growth and physique, the result of poor and irregular diet—a vegetarian diet principally, and not enough of that. But once within the home they increase fairly well in stature and weight. For they get beef, not in extravagant quantities, for five ounces of cooked meat four times a week is not a Gargantuan allowance, while suet-pudding, soup, and bread-and-cheese, in their turns, take the place of meat at the mid-day meal. This, with plenty of bread-and-dripping, or perhaps treacle, with three-quarters of a pint of coffee, tea, or cocoa, at breakfast and supper, forms a diet simple but sufficient.

From the workshops to the schoolroom is the next transition—the schoolroom, which is also used as a chapel on Sundays, when there is a bright choral service that many residents in the neighbourhood are glad to attend—for the school is the necessary accompaniment of the workshop. Of school the boys get three hours a day, the smaller boys having school in the morning and work in the afternoon, while the bigger ones take the reverse order. At this moment, however, the boys are all let loose—you can hear them shouting in the playground, and there is nothing more interesting to be seen than the boys' table of good conduct marks, the names all arranged according to the companies to which the boys belong; of which there are four, each about thirty strong. Each boy may earn a good conduct mark per day, a course which brings him honours in the way of badges of distinction, besides some solid advantages in the way of pocket-money. To the most worthy also are allotted what are called the Truro outfits, sums amounting to about seven pounds ten shillings, given when the boys leave the school to go out into the world. The hall, by the way, which serves as chapel and schoolroom, is also known as the Truro Hall, having been built with a grant from Lady Truro's grand bequest to poor and friendless boys.

But, after all, the distinction most

valued by the boys is the purely honorary one of being inscribed upon the shield of honour that hangs in the hall as the best athlete of the year, and this draws attention to the great advantages of the 'Boys' Home in the way of athletic training. And athleticism, which has perhaps rather declined in estimation among the higher classes, seems to have developed wonderfully with the lower strata of society. The artisans, as we knew them of old, rarely cared for athletics, but their sons, who have practically discarded the pipe and the pot, are often found among the cricket and football players, and form more and more the bulk of recruits to the volunteer regiments.

This reflection brings us to the playground, where the boys are climbing and swinging in a fine open court, with a great pile of deals on one side of it, destined for the firewood-shop. In summer the boys have an hour's gymnastics a day, as well as half an hour's drill, performing their manual exercise with wooden rifles; and, when the boys march out with the band at their head, the sight is something imposing. The band is naturally a great subject of pride to the boys, and its strains brighten up life's dull stream not only for the home, but for its neighbours round about. And it is another means of promoting a start in life for its inmates. For the band-boys are in great request among the regimental bands of the British army. Those who in this way enter the army seem to like it. Here, anyhow, is the unbiassed testimony of one of the old boys writing back to his home:

"Please tell all the band-boys that the army is the best place they can come to. We have such games. One of the boys bought a ball of string, and when I was asleep they tied my toe, and kept tugging at it. Next night I was up to it. I lay head downwards, with my mouth wide open"—with the result that as his friend was fumbling around for the missing toe, he put his finger into the other's mouth—"and I bit," added the writer with honest pride.

And this brings us to the domestic part of the establishment, where we find that all the work of the house is done by these active young people, the former wanderers of the streets. Fatigue parties are told off in military style to sweep rooms, to be active about the washing-tubs, or to hang up the wet clothes in the hot presses, whence they—meaning the clothes—will

presently issue warm and dry quite independently of weather or hanging out. The boys seem to relish this kind of work, too, and especially the kitchen work, as is the manner of boys in general. And some carry with them into the world affectionate remembrance of this wholesome housework. "Give my love," writes one who is far away, "to the blankets and sheets, also the dear old copper-sticks and washing-tubs." Then there are the lavatories, where the boys have a good scrub three times a day, each boy having a little spout of flowing water for his ablutions. There on Saturday nights, after a plentiful application of soap, the boys dive into a small plunge-bath, in at one end and out at the other—diving, floundering, and splashing.

Then to the dormitories, which are like barrack-rooms, scrupulously neat and clean, with blankets and bedding folded neatly on the little camp-bedsteads; and then to the dining-hall, where the boys will soon be engaged in the most joyful operation of the day, especially as this is one of the red-letter baked-meat-and-potatoes days.

One of the important points in achieving a successful result for the future career of the boys, is to keep up a kindly intercourse with them after they leave, and show them that their old friends have still a kindly interest in their welfare. Already, since the foundation of the Regent's Park home, it has seen some four hundred "old boys" established in life, and settled in various parts of the world—in Canada, in the Far West, in Australia, with others serving as soldiers and sailors, and a numerous colony working as artisans at home. And nearly all of these keep up a correspondence with the home. One writes from Natal, where he is at work, and has just met another old boy who has been through the Zulu War. Another young soldier writes from India that he is coming home with his regiment, although he has been offered a good post in the police out there; and presently comes to see his old friends in all the glitter of his newly-won sergeant's-stripes. A third writes from Chili, where he is making cigars. While one, who dates from Bonnie Scotland, writes feelingly of the faces of those "who were like mothers to him in the dear home," and with an almost audible sigh, "I sometimes wish I was in it again;" while he adds, with something like envy, "Well, boys, I must say you are well off, getting a week's holiday."

This week's holiday, by the way, is likely to be an annual thing—the most glorious thing for boys that can be imagined—a whole week at the seaside, running wild on the beach, with all the delights of a sort of summer encampment in an empty house. Everybody welcomes the boys, and cheers them as they march past with their band playing a quick step.

Another great event in the school year is the Founders' Day, when all the old boys who can come, and the present boys, dine together, and have an afternoon of sports. And here may be recalled the pleasant and prosperous history of the institution—how it grew from small beginnings in the Euston Road, where one man—pre-eminently the founder of the institution—began the work, with two small boys as the first inmates, in a small dwelling-house, hired at his own cost. Before the year was out, the number of inmates had increased to fifty, and the work went on till the house was found too small, and the home took a terrace all to itself.

The result of our Boys' Home in the conduct of its pupils in after life has now been fairly tested, and the great bulk of those launched into the world are found to be doing well—some of them "tip top," as an old boy reports of himself. Not long since, the home has heard of one of its boys who has worked himself up to a commission as lieutenant in the British Army; there are others in the Royal Navy, and in the merchant service. Of the whole five hundred and sixty-nine who have left the home since its establishment, only thirty-three cannot be satisfactorily accounted for, and of this number many were only under Home influence for a very short time. So that in the overpowering bulk of cases the boyish waifs have been turned into honest industrious citizens. As an example of the future provided for the boys when they leave the home, the destiny of the thirty-three boys who left in the course of 1882 may be quoted. Three were apprenticed to carpenters, one to a gilder, six have become railway-servants, one has entered a printing-office, two have gone to shoe-making, two to tailoring, six have entered army bands, one is employed at a merchant's, two have gone to a baker's, one is at a turner's, and one in a china shop, while seven have been placed in employment by their friends.

And then, it may be asked, is it not better for a boy and his parents that he

should be left to run wild, so that he may be sent to an industrial school and thus obtain a start in the world, while other parents toil to maintain their children and pay school fees, yes, and rates that go to help in the support of the wastrel's children? Well, there is a good deal in that question that it is difficult to answer. But thus much may be said—the boys must be rescued anyhow. In making them creditable citizens you cut at the root of pauperism and poverty. Do not grudge these poor boys, who have done no harm, the chance of the honest, useful future that this and other homes offer them. The law does provide for mulcting the neglectful parent of a portion of the cost of his child's maintenance in an industrial school; and if the sums so recovered are trifling, that is due to the wretched poverty of many of these parents. On the other hand, the principle of industrial training is one that should be carried out for the benefit of children who are cared for by their parents, as well as for those who are provided for by these institutions. That a boy, whether rich or poor, should have the opportunity of following the line marked out by his capacities, and the chance of mechanical training in that craft, calling, or occupation for which his abilities mark him out, is a matter of vital import for the future prosperity of the country, and the future happiness of its people. Already institutions have sprung up with this general purpose, and we hope, in another paper, to take some account of them.

THE ROBIN.

Here long white fingers o'er the keys
Wandered, a quiet hour to please,
And 'neath their touch in low, sweet swell,
The mellow music rose and fell;
She paused upon a chord to see
The robin in the willow-tree.

Over the poet's page she bent,
In his rich melody content;
The firelight lit the graceful room,
And all without was cold and gloom;
And yet she left the hearth to see
The robin in the willow-tree.

'Mid flowers and china smoked the cup
That women best love filling up;
And pages traced by loving hands,
Brought tidings from fair foreign lands;
She turned from letters, and from tea,
To fling crumbs 'neath the willow-tree.

The pretty, faithful, constant friend,
To the hushed life, love taught to lend
A sense of sweet companionship;
With moistened eye and smiling lip,
She listens to its melody—
The robin in the willow-tree.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

OUR ARCHERY CLUB.

ONE Froissart, who lived and wrote of the reign of King Edward the Third, day when Englishmen were much given to the use of the long bow, has left, as a record of his experience of our forefathers, the statement that they took their pleasure very sadly. There were, no doubt, meetings for archery practice at that time otherwise the English bowmen would never have made such terrible work as they did in the French ranks at Crecy and maybe Froissart was thinking of certain gatherings at which he had been present when he wrote that famous phrase, "moult tristement." Whether the English of that day were or were not a gloomy race we have no evidence save that statement of Froissart's, but assuredly, if he had lived some five hundred years later, and had come as a guest to one of the summer meetings of the Martle Valley Archery Society, he would have had ample grounds for making it. He would have seen that Englishmen assembled for the purpose of pleasure in the nineteenth century could and did take their pleasure sadly—quite as sadly, I am sure, as ever their forefathers in the fourteenth did, for, of all the pleasure-parties I ever attended, these gatherings were certainly the most sombre. Perhaps there is, and always has been, something depressing in long-bow practice; but then, how are we to account for Robin Hood and his merry men? Perhaps our archery club is a solitary exception in the matter of low spirits; perhaps Froissart's account of us is as accurate as are certain modern word-pictures, drawn by clever gentlemen on the other side of the water; or perhaps Robin Hood is simply a myth, like that other famous archer, William Tell.

I did not become a member of our archery club in the ordinary course of events, but was whirled into its ranks by what was then regarded as a gust of social revolution. My rank and position were not exactly "county," and up to the time of my election it had been a cardinal point in the constitution of the club that none but county people should be admitted to membership, and consequently there was throughout the district a sort of tacit agreement that a Martle Valley archer might be set down as a county personage, wherever you might meet him.

But this social cachet notwithstanding,

even in the best days of the club, it was not quite the same thing to go to the archery meetings as to the county balls; but it was, on the other hand, a more convenient and economical method for a mother of many daughters to show off her young brood. No hired post-chaises for the long drive to and fro were necessary; neither was the milliner's bill, on account of these outdoor meetings, a thing to be dreaded. They were always held in June and July, and everyone knows how large is the percentage of rainy days in these months; so the toilettes were, as a rule, designed on useful rather than ornamental lines, and many of them, I can well remember, came out season after season with all the regularity of seedtime and harvest.

Then again, in itself the social task was far less distasteful for the happy mother of a long string of plain daughters. Ah me! how often have I wondered at and admired the dauntless pluck of such as these, sitting patiently on the uncomfortable forms ranged along the walls of the assembly-rooms, waiting for partners, young men of the right sort, who, it is needless to say, never came. And I have pitied the poor girls too, for the bitterness which must have choked their hearts as they saw their dearest friends led out one after another, and they themselves sitting with their cards undefaced by the name of a single dancer. Now at the archery meetings all this was changed. The Miss Longestaffes, though they might sit partnerless all the evening at the Martlebury assemblies, were on the archery ground on equal terms with the Hon. Cordelia and the Hon. Diana Dunning, whose cards would always be full five minutes after they entered the room. Indeed, as far as my memory serves me, I believe I may say that they generally scored more of golds and reds than their honourable antagonists of blacks and whites. And good Mrs. Longestaffe, instead of breaking her back, and wearying her spirit, by sitting up hours beyond her usual bed-time in the stuffy room where the Martlebury assemblies were held, might rest comfortably under the shadowing trees, if it were fine, or in the tent if it rained, and enjoy the fresh summer air, while she discoursed with some one of her neighbours on the evergreen topics of the continuous deterioration and irreclaimable viciousness of the contemporary domestic servant, and of the lamentable fact that all the young men

who were fit for anything, nowadays went away to farm or to drive oxen in Australia, or to sit in a London office, instead of marrying or taking orders, as their fathers and uncles had done before them in their youth, and settling down to the one walk of life fitted for an English gentleman.

As I said before, our archery club was, as to its foundations, aristocratic. The Marquis of Folkestone was our president, and almost every other name on the committee was that of some noble or honourable lady or gentleman; but somehow, at the summer meetings, one would see many more rectors and curates than dukes and barons, and the lady archers who were not parsons' wives were, as a rule, their sisters, or their cousins, or their daughters. Whatever attractions archery might have had for the Folkestone nobility in other times, it certainly had lost them in these latter days.

And with this decline of aristocratic patronage came a falling off of subscriptions on the part of those enthusiastic archers, who only cared to face the targets when there was a chance of rubbing shoulders with Lord Laverock, Sir Thomas Kedgbury, or some such personage of high degree; and the secretary, Mr. Strapling, found it hard work to make ends meet at the close of the season. The deficit began to grow to a threatening amount, and at last the financial outlook became so bad that the winding-up of the affairs of the club seemed to be a contingency within measurable distance. Then at a certain meeting of the committee, a motion, as revolutionary in its way as the self-denying ordinance, was carried, and dissolution was kept off. This motion was to the effect that Mr. Antony Merridew—Lawyer Merridew's son, a smart young fellow, and a Cambridge man to boot—and Mr. and Mrs. Hutchins, of Offbury Grange, should be elected members of the club.

To those people who understood the ways of Folkestone, and all the outs and ins of county diplomacy, it was evident that a great revolution was at hand. To some, indeed, who held in highest reverence the statesmanship of Lord Eldon and the Iron Duke, it seemed as if the floodgates were really opened, and the foundations of society broken up. Time and change, which had left their mark upon the Pyramids, and overwhelmed the Roman Empire and the monarchy of France, were manifestly at work upon the destinies of the Martle Valley Archery

Club. It is true that a stranger, from Manchester say, or a citizen of the United States, might have been blind to the portent which the above-named proposals denoted, and might have failed to see that a new order of the centuries had sprung into being. Mr. Hutchins was the owner of Offbury Grange, as his great-grandfather had been before him, and Antony Merri-dew was as presentable and handsome a young man as any in the county; but then Mr. Merri-dew, senior, was a solicitor, and the man of business of many of the members of the club, and all the Hutchinses, up to this generation, had been plain farmer-folk. The grandmother of the present man was fabled to have sat at a stall in Martlebury market, and it was a well-authenticated fact that his mother used to make and sell cream-cheeses, going her rounds in a neat spring-cart at certain seasons of the year; but this good dame was ambitious of a higher station for her son. She kept him away from the farm, till he was almost eighteen, at a distant school, and whenever he was at home the most constant lesson that was taught him was, that he must be more of a gentleman than his father was. The result of this teaching was that he married the daughter of a neighbouring curate, cut off all acquaintance with his father's equals, kept up a dubious sort of visiting with the lesser clergy and the chief business people in Shillingbury; and was completely ignored, though he drove the smartest carriage in the neighbourhood, and was ready to bring out champagne on the slightest provocation, by the county people and by the aspiring crowd of probationers who were rising up early and late taking rest to compass their own admission into the charmed enclosure. Long and wearily had Mr. and Mrs. Hutchins striven for promotion. Old Mr. Hutchins had been a staunch Wesleyan, and had always driven over to Shillingbury to attend the chapel there; but the son had married into a church family, and, besides this, was quite aware of the fact that if he did not become a good churchman there would be no more chance of his storming the easiest of the social outworks than of becoming Lord Mayor of London, so he became rector's churchwarden, subscribed handsomely to the church restoration fund, and canvassed vigorously on behalf of the Tory candidate at an election which took place soon after he came into his inheritance. Both he and his wife had cast manv

an anxious glance towards the Martle Valley Archery Club as a possible stepping-stone; but up to the before-named crisis they had looked in vain. Antony Merri-dew's case was rather different. The club ran after him rather than he after the club. He had plenty of amusement already, and very little desire for social advancement of the sort he would get by becoming a member; but the moral was just the same. Attorneys and doctors had hitherto been kept out of all social gatherings just as rigorously as farmers, and here, in a breath as it were, the whole of the old barriers were levelled to the ground.

The next committee meeting saw a dozen or more names of people from the same social level up for election. Mr. Strapling, the secretary, wearied out by that harassing balance-sheet of his, was a zealous advocate for extending the bounds of the society; and the new departure, whatever its opponents might say of it, certainly soon placed the society upon a greatly improved financial basis. There was a balance to the good, and there were prizes worth shooting for, while last year the best gold had to be contented with five shillings, and the greatest aggregate score only got half-a-sovereign. Mr. Hutchins signalled his election by giving as a prize a handsome silver butter-dish. Mrs. Hutchins was not altogether pleased with the form her husband's offering assumed, deeming that it smacked a little too much of the dairy, and was herself in favour of a lofty electro-plated epergne; but a judicious friend assured her that Mr. Hutchins's less ornate suggestion was quite the right thing in the case of a new member.

And it was with this rush of the middle-classes that I myself stormed the breach of the Martle Valley Archery Club, and found myself in a position on three days in the year to shoot alongside the Marquis of Folkshire, or any other local magnate, provided they should be fired by an ambition to win Mr. Hutchins's silver butter-dish. But no such longings stirred them in these latter days. The archery-ground, whenever I happened to put in an appearance, was as black with the clerical broadcloth as the osier-ears down by our river were black with starlings in the autumn; but laymen, whether peer or commoner, were very scarce. Often I have been one of a lay minority numbering two, while around swarmed parsons of all ages.

sizes, and schools of thought, and right well they shot, many of them. I used to think that our meetings would have been more pleasant if my reverend rivals had been a trifle less absorbed in their sport, and less desperately in earnest. Perhaps my own loyalty to the most English of pastimes was a trifle lukewarm from the fact that I very rarely hit the target. I kept it up for a season or two; but then I began to find it rather dreary work pacing up and down between the targets in company with people, never very lively perhaps, and certainly very dull when they were taking their pleasure. I never was much of a lady's man, and my powers of conversation would show signs of giving out after the first half-dozen tramps between the shooting-points. Then, when a man talks on these occasions to a lady, he cannot do less than pick up any of her arrows which she may have dropped the last turn. My figure, my tailor tells me, is not quite so slim as it used to be, so that stooping to pick up anything is no very pleasing operation. My own arrows, which, as I said before, were very rarely to be found in the target, gave me quite as much stooping as I cared about.

And so after a time I gave up going in the morning amongst the competitors, and did not appear upon the ground until two o'clock, the hour of lunch. This meal, by no means the worst feature of a day's archery, was a collation in the true sense of the word. Everybody was supposed to bring as much as he himself would want, and to leave a margin over for the servants. One might often make some funny little character-studies by looking round the tables, and observing the fare which each had provided for himself, herself, or themselves. The Hon. Mrs. Cheshire generally contented herself with a packet of sandwiches and an apple, quenching her thirst with water, unless somebody might offer her a glass of wine. The first meeting Mr. and Mrs. Hutchins attended, when they sat down to lunch, Thomas, their groom, coachman, butler, and factotum, brought out of a capacious basket a couple of fine fowls, a tongue, and a bottle of champagne. The very next meeting Mrs. Cheshire became most attentive and polite to Mrs. Hutchins as the hour of luncheon drew near, and, as if by accident, found herself seated next to that lady in the tent. Mrs. Hutchins, half afraid that she might be taking a liberty in doing so, offered her aristocratic neighbour some of

her succulent chicken and home-cured tongue. Mrs. Cheshire did not seem in the least offended. She ate the two liver wings of the fowls, a good bit of tongue, drank well-nigh half the bottle of champagne, and then, after lunch, went up to the Rev. George Boddleham, a neighbouring rector, who worshipped her as he worshipped all the aristocracy, and asked him if he had not pitied her during lunch, and ended by abusing him for not having blackballed those odious Hutchinses when their names had come on for ballot.

Then there was Parson Dowton, who always won the prize for the highest aggregate score, the result, so his enemies declared, of continuous practice, uninterrupted even by the advent of Sunday. Mr. Dowton's speciality at lunch was an enormous pigeon-pie. He had no dovecote of his own, he had no money to spare for superfluous luxuries, and how he managed to shoot such a lot of pigeons as he did on his twenty acres of glebe was a mystery to everybody, and especially to Tanner, Mr. Winsor's head-keeper. The latter used to declare that Parson Dowton would have done a sight better as a gamekeeper than he did as a minister, and that a man must be up to some queer tricks who could shoot pigeons enough on twenty acres of land to keep a pigeon-pie always in the larder. This last remark of the keeper's may have had its source in envy and malice, and I have no means of knowing whether or not it was wholly true. I can only testify that on the one occasion when I lunched at Parson Dowton's board, pigeon-pie was the principal dish, so I have good ground at least for saying that he ate pigeons at other times besides at the luncheons at our archery meetings.

Our meetings were three every season. Up to the promotion of the Rev. Onesiphorus Tulke, the first had always been held in the pretty grounds of Pudsey rectory, but that gentleman at once shut his gates in our faces, and preached a sermon against us the very first time opportunity favoured him. He was furthermore suspected of having sent to the bishop a list of all the parsons belonging to the club, and opposite each name the number of hours wasted by each in frivolous trifling during the year. The second gathering always came off at The Latimers, and the last, the prize-meeting, at Bawtry Manor, a grand old Tudor house which had been virtually closed for the last five-and-twenty years to the outer world. This day, when

it did not rain, was always a pleasant one. The prizes, as they stood arranged on a massive oak table in the grand old entrance-hall, did not, it is true, make a very imposing show, but the ambitions they were designed to reward were not high-soaring.

Mrs. Bawtry, the then occupant of the manor, was a complete recluse. Five-and-twenty years before, her husband had been killed fox-hunting, and from that date she had never crossed the threshold of her home. She saw nobody except the clergyman of the parish, and a few old servants. Her husband had been the founder and first president of the club, and now the one event which had power to arouse her interest in any way, and distract her mind from its morbid regret of the past, was the annual prize-meeting, which had never been held elsewhere than on the lawn in front of the manor-house. There, a magnificent stretch of turf was kept cut and rolled like a bowling-green all the year round for this one day's festival. On the day of the meeting she would sit at her window all day long in her white dress—she wore no other colour, winter or summer—watching every arrow as it flew along the course. She must have seen one generation of archers, that amongst which she may have had her friends, pass away, and a fresh one spring up to which she was a name, and nothing more.

After the last arrow had been shot, there would be an adjournment en masse to the entrance-hall, and then those members of the club upon whom the cares of office did not rest, regaled themselves with tea and all sorts of light refreshments, while the committee were adding up the scores, and adjusting the prizes in another room. Of course, the lady of the house never appeared, but regularly at a certain hour the old butler would enter and deliver a message from Mrs. Bawtry to the effect that she hoped the ladies and gentlemen found everything to their satisfaction, and just as regularly an affirmative reply of thanks would be returned.

Naturally in our microcosm we had examples of many of the differing types of character which diversify the great world outside. There was dear old Parson Medlow, with a beaming smile and a kind word for every one; encouragement for the novices, and sage counsel in the matter of finger-guards and arrow-tips. He did not often hit the target himself, but he was always ready to explain to anybody how it might be done. Once I remember

he fluked an arrow right into the middle of the target, and when his name was called out as the winner of the best gold, the cheers which greeted the announcement were a just measure of the dear old boy's popularity. A very different man was Mr. Nolling, who never missed the target without giving everybody within hearing a full account of the cause of his failure: how a gust of wind came, or his finger slipped, or a fly got in his eye just as he let go the arrow. Nobody ever got a gold without his declaring that it was a palpable fluke, and he never scored one himself without affirming that he had felt quite sure of it before he shot. The demonstration, whenever Mr. Nolling might happen to be prize-winner, would be extremely moderate in character.

There was Mrs. Fanning, too, our champion lady archer, who won the principal ladies' prizes for seven years in succession. Mrs. Fanning was decidedly well-to-do; but she was likewise frugal, and for a long time she turned a deaf ear to the very broad hints of the secretary that she should offer a prize to be shot for. At last the hint was taken, and the announcement made. There was a little extra excitement at that particular prize meeting, for additional prizes were not over plentiful with us; but it abated rapidly when the benefactress produced an unmounted water-colour drawing by her eldest daughter—flowers and birds of paradise—as the first prize; and announced her intention of adding half-a-crown as a consolation prize for the second score. Mr. Dowton was the happy winner of the work of art; and, as he received it from the fair hands of the donor, he promised her that, the very next time she came into his drawing-room, she should see it framed and glazed, and in the place of honour on the walls. I fear the reverend gentleman was not altogether sincere in making this pretty speech of his, for I heard him a few minutes afterwards in a corner trying to persuade Miss Longestaffe, who had won the half-crown, to change prizes with him; but Miss Longestaffe, as the eldest of six, very promptly and prudently declined to barter.

A certain Mr. Boddleham, the rector of Beckley, was a cantankerous man. He was one of those men who always have a question to be answered, a matter to be explained at once. There never was a prize-meeting at which he did not dispute somebody's score, and enter a protest, or appeal generally to the ruling powers; but

the ruling powers, after a short experience of Mr. Boddleham and his ways, treated him, and his protests, and appeals, with very slight consideration. One morning I remember, after he had dropped all his arrows short, he insisted that the targets had been set up too far apart, and proceeded to pace the ground by way of substantiating his assertion. It happened that Mr. Medlow was shooting at the same target, and he being of a drowsy temperament, was nodding complacently in a semi-doze awaiting his turn, and unconscious of the strife which had just arisen. Suddenly he opened his eyes, and seeing nobody in front of the target, imagined that it must be his turn to shoot; so he advanced to the shooting-point, and before anyone could stop him, or before he himself saw the form of Mr. Boddleham striding yard-long steps down the range, he let fly an arrow, which passed very close to Mr. Boddleham's ear, and whizzed into the canvas of the target a few yards in front of that gentleman's nose. He stopped short as if he had been indeed shot, and, quite forgetting how many yards he had measured, rushed back to the other target. There he expended the full force of his wrath upon Mr. Medlow, who came forward to meet him full of apologies; but all these were vain to appease him. He fumed, and came as near swearing as a cleric could, declaring that he had been made the subject of a low practical joke, and finishing off by renouncing all connection with the society. Never before had there been shot such a lucky arrow as that irregular one of Parson Medlow's. It was in a way as great a deliverance to our archery club as that famous one of Walter Tyrrel's was to the Rufus-harried Saxons, for our meetings knew the presence of Mr. Boddleham no more. Some one else, no doubt, has sprung up to assume the rôle of the man with a grievance. An archery club, or indeed any club, without such a personage is well-nigh unthinkable.

Whenever an Englishman sits down to read a book written by a foreigner about English people and their ways, he will, in nine cases out of ten, after twisting the pages about, and pishing, and pshawing, and muttering, throw it down with the remark that it would have been well if the beggar had learnt something of his subject, and got rid of his infernal foreign prejudices, before he sat down to write. No doubt it would. People ought not to write books without having thoroughly

comprehended and assimilated the subject matter of which they propose to treat; but if this rule were carried out our reference libraries would be crowded from dawn to dark, and the world would be minus many thousand volumes, though, perhaps, scarcely the poorer for the loss. But in any case, I doubt whether lifelong study would bring illumination to the mind of the intelligent foreigner in reference to certain phases of English life. These censors and depicitors change the climate, but not their way and manner of regarding men, when they ship themselves across the Channel; and when they set to work to write about us they look at us very much as if we were foreigners living in England. No phase of English life can be more hard to be understood by such a one, than the position and manner of life of our country clergy. I myself have been a great wanderer in my time, and my feet have not kept to the beaten track, indeed they have generally strayed out of it the first opportunity, and I have always made a point of having a chat with the curé, or the pastor, or the pfarr-herr, or the padre, whenever I might have the chance. I have, as a rule, found the above-mentioned like our own divines in one respect, viz., that they are ever ready for a gossip; but here the comparison must end. As I have been listening to the simple chatter of some Swiss or Italian priest—hearing how he managed to live on a sum considerably smaller than the earnings of an agricultural labourer; how everything had grown dearer since the foreigners had begun to swarm over the land; how he had been three times in his life to the chief town of the district, but never to Turin or Geneva; how he would have gone to bed hungry many a night last winter, if the landlord at the hotel on the post-road had not sent him now and then a basket of broken food—I have often tried to realise the wonder and amazement which would have filled his mind, could he have been placed upon that carpet in the Arabian Nights, and wafted straight away to the lawn in front of Bawtry Manor while one of the prize-meetings of our archery club was being held. Would he have believed me when I proceeded to tell him that nine-tenths of the men before him—shooting their arrows and demurely pacing up and down the greensward, adjourning to eat what they called a "scratch lunch," a meal which would have seemed to him a real banquet of Lucullus, and driving away in their

own vehicles with their wives and daughters—were ordained priests like himself? He would have found it, indeed, a hard saying, I am quite sure; and had he gone back to his own place, and told what he had seen to his people gathered round the village-fountain, he would have run the risk of being credited with the proverbial failing of the traveller. And clever gentlemen from Paris who draw telling pictures of home-life and peculiar institutions, are almost as much at sea as my hypothetical village-priest would have been. When they begin to scratch a pin's-point beneath the surface, they lose all power of just apprehension; and, speaking frankly, I am not at all surprised. Their pictures of the squire and his family are manifestly painted with the assistance of the contemporary English novel; and the contemporary English novelist, it is to be feared, works more by imagination than by experience. The British squire has very slight counterpart in Continental life, and the British parson has absolutely none; so there is no wonder that the foreign critics are at sea in dealing with him. They fail to realise what effects the home and hereditary influences and the system of education have produced in the character of the men whom they find in England occupying the position of a Savoyard or Auvergnat curé, and they go and make comparisons which, in logic, are about as admissible as would be the process of adding together shillings and square yards in arithmetic.

In these latter days, when clerical activity has become a thing of terror and bewilderment to those who remember the deep and tranquil slumber which lapped the church of their youth, it is probable that the clerical element in our archery-club will grow weaker, and, perhaps, the change will be all for the best. In an ideal parson's life there would possibly be no room for archery and such like trifles; but then, parsons, after all, are mere men, and do not lead ideal lives. They have, on the whole, a fairly good time of it; but I am inclined to think that those people who gather their impressions of clerical life in England from Mr. Trollope's pages are scarcely told enough about the "seamy side," Mr. Crawley and Mr. Quiverful notwithstanding. The blank solitude of a country village in the seven or eight months of wintry weather—the leaden sky, the sodden landscape, the reeking damps of winter, and the icy winds of spring, are shadows which cover a goodly portion of

the picture; and I, for one, am not going to grudge the few touches of light which may be represented by three or four days in the course of the summer spent in archery or in some other kindred amusement.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER X. DOWN INTO THE VALLEY.

HELEN was a consistently lazy person, both in mind and body. She never walked if she could help it, and, young as she was, a morning's stroll about the garden was often enough to tire her for the afternoon. But the day after Theo came she was unusually active, and they stayed out all the morning with the dogs in the park and garden. Theo wanted to see everything, and it amused Helen to show her old friend all her new possessions. They went to the stable, and inspected Aster after his journey. Helen had learnt from Theo long ago to be at home among horses and dogs; these were among the tastes which Mrs. Fraser thought useless and unfeminine, blaming Colonel North for encouraging them in his adopted child.

At luncheon Mr. Goodall proposed that they should go out for a drive in the afternoon, but the day was inclined to be rainy and windy, and Helen preferred staying at home.

"Go to your work and leave us in peace," she said, smiling at John. "Theo and I will be quite happy indoors; we have plenty to talk about, and, after all, there are no pretty drives."

"You don't look for them; there are more than you think. You make no use of the horses at all," he said, a little injured.

"I told you not to buy them for me," said Helen placidly. "You didn't suppose I should be one of those martyrs who exercise their horses every afternoon? Take Theo out, and let her drive, if you want to make her happy."

"I should be very glad, but the carriage is not suited for that kind of thing."

"Poor Theo! We are much too tame and civilised for you," said Helen.

"Will you let me walk down with you and see your works?" said Theo, looking up at Mr. Goodall, whose face brightened; for a moment he had seemed to feel as if he understood neither of them.

"Any other day I should be most happy," he said. "But I have to go to

Mainley this afternoon. I will take you all over them some day, if you like. They might interest you, if you have never seen anything of the kind."

"I know they would interest me," said Theo.

"It is going to rain, and you are to stay quietly with me this afternoon," said Helen.

She was perfectly contented with this arrangement, and rather liked a wet day, which gave her an excuse for being really comfortable. A novel, a sofa, perfect liberty to talk, read, or sleep as she pleased—Helen wanted very little more to make her life happy.

Theo had often rebelled violently against this state of mind in her cousin, and had now and then succeeded in making her ashamed of it. She saw that Helen's marriage had not made her at all more energetic; but that day she did not speak her mind.

They were not quite the old two; perhaps they never would be again.

Looking at Helen's soft face on the cushion, the book drooping in her hand as if she hardly cared to hold it, Theo felt rather sad.

The rain dashed in storms against the windows; they talked a little at intervals; then Helen turned over a page; then her eyelids dropped for a few minutes; then she woke up and talked again. At last she fell sound asleep, and then Theo got up and went to the window.

As she looked out, the clouds were growing thinner and hurrying faster every moment; light began to shine in the distance, beyond the wild flying mist of rain; the hills, far away, were in sunshine now, and the whole air began to be flooded with a yellow brilliancy.

Theo watched it for a few minutes, and then turned round to look once more at the smart, but dismal room, and her cousin asleep on the sofa.

A little later, she and Wool walked down the drive together and turned into the village street. The good mothers of Woodcote, looking out of their doors when the rain stopped, watched her with curiosity and interest as she passed—tall, erect, graceful, walking fast, going away into the country. They never saw Mrs. Goodall march off alone like this; in fact, they hardly ever saw her at all, except driving by, for Mr. Goodall was nervous about infectious diseases, and did not like his wife to go into cottages; though he was generous to the people, and ready to help

them in any other way. Some of these women who watched Theo knew that Mrs. Goodall's cousin was staying with her. It was the fashion at Woodcote to think Helen a beauty. They were not so sure about this young lady; she was of a type they did not so well understand. Looking so proud, and straight, and fearless, with her large black dog running by her side, these good people were a little alarmed at Theo.

Only one girl, who had had great trouble, and who was crossing the road just then, and spoke to Wool, and met Theo's eyes with a smile, gave it as her opinion that this lady was worth a dozen of Mrs. Goodall.

Theo wished to explore the country, but she did not feel at all inclined to go down the straight high-road, between rows of new houses, and past the great pottery works. In the middle of the village, near the church, a lane struck off to the left, and she turned along this, while the rain came flashing down again between her and the sun, and up to the left a great arch of rainbow rose above Mr. Goodall's trees and chimneys. The western distance, which attracted her, was all in a wet, golden haze; even the colliery smoke was gilded, and hung about in the valley, a dark, beautiful mist. In this part of the village the houses were old and thatched, with thick, whitewashed walls; broken flights of steps led up to them; their little, bright gardens were perched on banks of grass and stones. Here and there was an opening into a field, with a rough stile, and a bit of tall, straggling hedge, red with hawthorn-berries. All this was old Woodcote of many years ago, before engineers and manufacturers had found out its hidden treasures. Perhaps—for he was a man of this country—Mr. Goodall's grandfather had lived and brought up his children under one of these thatched roofs.

Theo and Wool followed the lane, which went climbing slowly southward along the high ground, gradually becoming more stony and rough, and leaving the houses behind. Up here there were one or two small homesteads built of sandstone, which cropped out pretty often in the road itself. One was a little farm with pigs routing about in its tumble-down yard; another had a timber-yard, and behind it the fields seemed to fall steeply and suddenly away into the valley, where the white smoke of a train was stealing along now.

Theo walked on fast. She liked the cool, rainy air, the freshness of the high ground, with its foreground of ruddy hedges, and distance full of golden mystery. Her spirits rose; she was happy, she felt free and adventurous, and wondered how anyone could call this country dull, or ugly, or uninteresting. The rough, untidy lane was far enough from civilisation, certainly; there was a different life stirring from any she had ever known before, for her home with Colonel North had been in the rich, luxurious peace of Kent, and Linwood, too, had park palings, and neat roads, and model cottages about it. This was a strange sort of country—not lonely, and yet wild; dishevelled, hard, pulled about by the rough hands that made their living out of it; yet the children were rosy and smiling, and a merry firelight streamed out of the cottage doors, and plenty of trees grew in the hedgerows, and the sun shone on pleasant hills and valleys, from which the mist was clearing away every moment.

That ridge with its Scotch firs and poplars, which Theo had first seen from her window, seemed very near her now; she could see it across the valley, a mile or two away; the roofs of one or two farmhouses peeped out among the trees. But between her and it lay the valley, with its railway, and mines, and brickworks. She could hear the working of the engines, and could look down upon the black groups of buildings, the great waste banks, the pools of water. Every now and then all seemed hidden in smoke and mist; then a clearer view would come, as a fresh wind raised the curtain and drove it along the valley.

Presently she came to the top of a lane, which turned out of her own lane, and went down a steep pitch into the valley. Wool ran on that way at once, and his mistress followed him. The road dived down in a hollow of its own between rocky banks, with low oak-trees almost arching overhead, their roots half bare among the crumbling stones. Blackberry-bushes hung down in a thick tapestry, and the sun now filled the hollow with flickering lights and shadows. Below, where the banks were not so steep, the road, shining with rain and yellow sunlight, was like a golden path sweeping down into the valley.

Theo went down, following her road without much thought of where it was taking her, only conscious of a happy freedom and the joy of discovery. She had met no one since she left the village, but with Wool she never felt lonely. She went

down, down, and found herself descending upon a large colliery which to her eyes looked deserted. She saw great black wheels high up in the air, but they were not going round; the long roofs, the mounds, the low, round brick-kilns, with slow, black smoke stealing up from one or two of them, all seemed to be uninhabited and left to take care of themselves. She had expected to see a crowd of colliers with grimy faces hurrying here and there, and to hear a Babel of rough voices; she saw nothing but machinery and buildings, and heard nothing but a low guttural noise of pumping and fizzing, which went on by itself, to all seeming, without any human agency.

She stood in the lane for a few minutes, some distance above the gate of the colliery. She could still look down on it, and on the railway beyond, and she was aware that there were more chimneys and buildings to the left, farther up the valley. The immediate neighbourhood of the colliery did not look inviting. Its gate opened into a road with deep ruts of black mud, with wild, rank grass and coarse weeds growing on each side. Just beyond, by the roadside, there was a great pond of poisonous-looking water, with green and yellow lights in it. This pond was gradually spreading itself; the road had been raised above it, but was damp and spongy, and full of holes, and on the other side a flat meadow was becoming a marsh, out of whose unnatural greenness some sad black trunks stood up with a dismal, ghostly air against the sky; their roots had been sapped, and poisoned, and killed by the creeping water.

Still all was silent and lonely, and at this moment the sun was covered by wild clouds sweeping up from the west; there was a sudden chill in the wind, and Wool, as his mistress paused before walking on into this desolation, came and sat down beside her and gave a small whine.

"You don't want to go back, Wool?" said Theo. "This is all so very odd and savage, we must discover a little more. Don't you like it much better than London?"

Wool got up, and wagged his tail. He was not quite sure; he only knew that he liked whatever she chose to do, and he followed her obediently down the last little slope of the hill. She stopped again at the gate; there was still no one to be seen; she pushed it open and turned into the black road. She was soon in the midst of the buildings, crossing iron rails on which

some trucks were standing, and following narrow, muddy ways between long, low sheds, in which she now perceived that bricks were drying. Then she found herself in the warm light that poured out from the red glowing furnace of a brick-kiln. Then two or three wild-looking boys, all besmeared with clay, crossed her path, and stared at her and the dog as if they were creatures from another country. Theo stopped the tallest and most intelligent-looking of these boys, and asked him if any work was going on.

"Yes," he said.

"Where are the men?" said Theo.

"Down the pit."

"Does anybody—can I go down the pit?" she said dreamily, fixing her eyes on the boy.

He grinned, and looked at her from head to foot. Then his handsome, smiling eyes met hers.

"Taint fit for you," he said.

"But I should like it," said Theo.

"Where is the pit? Can you take me down?"

He shook his head.

"Yonder," he said, and pointed to a black and grey bank and a high stage of machinery.

"Down in there?" said Theo. "And if you work here, why are not you black?"

"I work in the clay," he said, looking away as if to hide his amusement; to him she was evidently a new, and charming, and refined sort of idiot.

"Well, thank you," said Theo. She was looking at him, considering whether he was too old and too nice to care for sixpence.

"Where do you live?"

"Up at Deerpur," he said, nodding his head westward.

"Is that Deerpur where the trees are?"

"Yes."

"How very near!" said Theo.

Suddenly, to end this strange, little talk, a wild shower came flying down over the colliery with such hurried violence that she looked round for shelter. She was stepping into the dark recesses of the nearest shed, when the door of a low, red building behind her opened. She had been standing with her back to this little house, hardly noticing it, as she talked to the boy, and even he had been too much interested in her to see that somebody was looking out of the window—somebody

whose glance would have sent him away to his work in pretty quick time.

But now the door was opened, and a grave young man came out into the rain.

"The office is not comfortable; but if you would care to take shelter—" he began in a low, indifferent voice, which yet had a little effort in it, and though his eyes were quiet enough, a flush came up into his face as Theo looked at him.

She held out her hand, smiling, and a little startled too.

"Mr. Fane! This is very funny," she said.

"Yes; you remember me? That's the funniest part of all, somehow," said Gerald, his eyes brightening suddenly. "Do come in. I have a chair for you, if there is nothing else. Come in, old fellow. Your one dog, isn't he? He deserves the honour."

The sweet, ready recognition had raised the poor fellow's spirits to a wild height of joy. Ashamed of his squalid surroundings, of his shabby coat even, for he was almost a boy, he had watched her from the window with a half resolve to hide himself, and to take no advantage of the accident which must have brought her there. But the rain made that course impossible.

Theo was very much amused, and really pleased to see Mr. Fane again. The thought of Mr. Goodall and his opinions crossed her mind without interfering at all with her enjoyment of this little adventure. She sat in a very hard chair in the dark, gloomy office, looking quite as beautiful, Gerald thought, as when he had first seen her radiant in white and flowers in the chancel of Linwood Church on that happy, miserable wedding-day. She sat there and talked delightfully, while he stood by the window and tried to talk without looking at her, afraid that she might see the wild thoughts which were flying through his mind. But he need not have been afraid of any such discernment on Theo's part. His thoughts did not at present trouble her at all; besides, poor boy! he had been well trained in hiding them successfully.

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A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIV. THE TALE THE OLD LETTERS TOLD.

ARCHIE, when he left Anastasia, felt very shaky and dizzy, and was glad to stop at a cottage near the station to beg for a glass of water and a few minutes' rest. Hardly, however, had he sat down when he sank into a stupor of the kind which had overcome him in the train, and which now so terrified the good folk of the cottage that they sent at once for the village doctor. They were not made easier by the doctor's report that it was a bad case of fever. What was to be done? That, to the doctor's mind, depended upon whether he promised to be a paying patient or not. If he did not, he ought to be taken forthwith to the Ryecote fever-hospital; if he did, it was much more becoming that, as a gentleman, he should be taken care of in the village. Therefore the doctor suggested that they should search his pockets, and his purse for a card with his name and address upon it. Archie's purse having been examined under this pretext and found to be satisfactorily full, the doctor not only decided against his removal to Ryecote, but upon his removal to his own house and care. He had already two lunatics in his charge, and the addition therefore of a delirious patient was not of much account.

Now, the business of keeping lunatics is demoralising. It does not demoralise always, of course, but that is its tendency. A "mad doctor" is naturally inclined to take a despondent view of a paying patient's symptoms—to pronounce him insane when he is sane, or to decline to pronounce him

safe when he is perfectly cured. Now, Dr. Dakin from long practice had got to be an adept in the art of keeping a patient as long as possible on his hands. Therefore, though Archie came to himself for a short time in the evening, and then begged that his mother should be telegraphed for, and gave her address, "Mrs. Pybus, Vicarage, Edgburn, Leeds," the doctor, fearing that she might insist upon his removal, conveniently forgot the address. It was not till three days later, when Archie was again lucid enough to give an account of himself, that Mrs. John heard by telegram how and where he was. Ida's second letter she did not get till a week later, when the Rev. John coming upon it by a lucky chance, at the very moment when he was going to the post, at last re-addressed and forwarded it to Heatherley.

He meant, of course, to have forwarded it the day it came, and had put it carefully aside till the afternoon, when he could post it on his parish round; but out of sight was to be out of mind as regards most mundane matters with the Rev. John, and it was by mere good luck that Mrs. John was favoured with it at all.

Hardly had she received, read, and digested it, before a telegram from the Rev. John almost put its contents out of her head:

"Mr. Tuck is dead. Died intestate. Shall come on by first train with the letters."

"What is it, mother?" cried Archie, who, ill and languid as he was, noticed the sudden distress in Mrs. John's face.

"It's nothing, dear."

"She's married!" he gasped, half rising into a sitting posture, only to fall back again through weakness.

"No, indeed, Archie dear; it's nothing about her marriage, or about her at all.

But telegrams always startle me, as they've never brought me anything but bad news. It's from your uncle, to say he's coming this morning."

As Mrs. John was most rigorous in telling always the truth, and usually the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, Archie was satisfied, as far as Ida was concerned.

"Does the doctor think me worse, mother?" imagining his uncle had been telegraphed for.

"Indeed, no, Archie; he thinks you very much better—out of danger now, he says." Archie lay still, meditating this for a few moments; for his mind, like his hand, took some time now to grasp even light and little things.

"Then why did uncle telegraph?" It was, in truth, the last mode of communication to which the Rev. John was likely to resort in ordinary.

"He wished to consult me about some business, Archie; and, as I couldn't go to him, he has to come here."

"It's about that woman?" he asked, after another interval of meditation. "That lawsuit?"

"It has nothing at all to do with it. Pray don't worry yourself or me about it, dear Archie. The doctor insists on your being kept perfectly quiet; and I mustn't even talk too much to you." Archie, therefore, gave it up and soon forgot it, lapsing back into that dreamy state in which ideas, slipping altogether from under the control of the will, wander aimlessly here and there in all directions, like sheep without a shepherd.

On the Rev. John's arrival, some hours later, he was shown into the doctor's study, where Mrs. John immediately joined him.

"What are we to do about it, dear?" he asked in some agitation, when she had read the lawyer's letter announcing Mr. Tuck's death and Archie's succession to his property.

"Have you brought the letters, John?" she asked in turn, with a look, and in a voice of distress.

The Rev. John produced from his pocket-book the two letters Tom Chown had treasured among those he had received from Archie. Mrs. John read and re-read them without seeming to derive much comfort or guidance from their perusal. The first ran:

"MY DEAREST CHAR,—Need I say how unhappy I was to have to hurry away before our honeymoon was half over? And

the worst of it is the confounded business which took me away will keep me away for another month or more. Pray let me know how your poor father is. I was so glad that he was well enough and forgiving enough to be at our wedding. If he had known all the circumstances of the case, he would have forgiven you before now, and perhaps not forgiven me even now. However, I hope to prove myself more worthy of his forgiveness in the future than I have in the past; and to try to make up to you, too, dear, for all the suffering my selfishness has caused you. —With love to your father and Grace, believe me, dearest Char, ever your loving husband, GEOFFREY CHOWN."

The second ran:

"DEAR CHAR,—I enclose a cheque for all I can scrape together. It's most unjust and disgraceful that your father should have left you without a penny. If he had meant, as you think, to alter his will, why didn't he do it on the day he said he forgave you—on our wedding-day? I don't believe he ever really forgave you. Grace took good care that he shouldn't. Well, she has got all she schemed for, but it will not prosper with her—mark that. I am sorry I can send you no more than the enclosed, but I never was in such straits for money. I do not really know what to do, or where to turn.—Ever yours,

"GEOFFREY CHOWN."

"I have the other letters with me," said Mrs. John, taking a packet from her pocket.

They were letters written by Archie's father to his mother, which Mrs. John had kept for Archie. She took one from the packet and compared its handwriting with that of Tom Chown's treasures. There wasn't the shadow of a shade of doubt that the same hand had written both. The writing was extraordinarily large, and each letter stood a little apart, as in print, from the next, the pen having evidently been raised between the forming of each letter. The spelling besides was bad and peculiar, and uniform in both sets of letters. There were other resemblances, too, which made it evident at a glance to any one that the "Geoffrey Guard" of one set of letters was the "Geoffrey Chown" of the other.

"There's no doubt about it," said Mrs. John, sitting down, leaning her head on her hand, and looking blankly before her. The Rev. John, with one hand resting on the table, looked down upon her helplessly

and hopelessly. "He married this girl Charlotte for her money; and then, when he was disappointed by getting none, he deserted her and married Archie's mother—also for money. He was always in difficulties, and always took the first way out of them that offered."

"It might not have been a valid marriage," suggested the Rev. John.

"With her father and her family at the wedding? They would take care it was valid enough. Besides, it was then his own interest that it should be valid when he expected a fortune with her."

"But it might have been the second marriage."

"Why, Mrs. Guard came a bride to Colston, and that was, you know, just after poor Tom was born. Did his mother seem to you a lady, John?"

"No, I think not; but she might have been," for the Rev. John was not a keen or careful observer.

"I see no way out of it at all," said Mrs. John despondently, after a long pause of thought. "It will be a terrible blow to my boy. No one would feel a disgrace of this kind so keenly."

"Must we make it known, Mary?" asked the Rev. John timidly.

"Do you mean we should allow him to take possession of the property?" cried she, aghast.

"There would be no wrong done if he married Ida."

This suggestion was the result of long and deep meditation in the train; nevertheless, it was made shamefacedly, with a just fear of Mrs. John's scrupulousness.

In a moment all the consequences of acting upon this advice shot through the quick mind of Mrs. John. It would clear at once out of the way Captain Brabazon's rivalry and Mrs. Tuck's opposition to Archie's suit; since the captain certainly cared only for Ida's fortune, and Mrs. Tuck would consider Archie, as her late husband's heir, a more than eligible match. As for Ida herself, so far from wronging her, it would right her—extricate her from a false and wretched position, make her, as well as Archie, happy for life, and at the same time leave her as perfectly in possession of the property as though it had come to her directly.

On the other hand, if they made officious use of this evidence—indirect, inconclusive, merely suggestive—which they had come by unfairly, and which ought to have been buried in Tom's grave, they would wreck

Ida's life and both wreck and embitter Archie's, for there was no disgrace he would feel more poignantly than this of illegitimacy.

Here was a strong case; and here, confirming it judicially, was the venerated authority of the Rev. John. But Mrs. John, having been used to think not for herself only, but for her husband also, was not shaken by this reasoning, nor by the Rev. John's support of it, nor even by the picture which haunted her of the wan and worn face of her boy, lying at that moment between life and death—was not shaken, we say, by these pleadings in her certainty that the suppression of this evidence was wrong, and therefore not to be thought of. The only thing to be thought of was the concealment, if possible, of his illegitimacy from Archie. If only this could be contrived, the rest might go—must go.

Such were the thoughts that passed through Mrs. John's mind as she sat looking haggard, hopeless, years older through the troubles which had come thick upon her of late. At last she said, in answer to the Rev. John's suggestion, "There would be no wrong done if he married Ida":

"There would be no wrong done to Ida, John, but it would be wrong for us to do it; wouldn't it, dear?" looking up into his anxious face, with a meek apology in her own for differing from him on a question of right or wrong.

"But it isn't as though we were certain, or it was certain, Mary."

"We couldn't honestly leave it as it is, dear, I think. We must either make sure how it is ourselves, or let them make sure. I try to think of it as if it wasn't my boy—my boy—"

Here poor Mrs. John broke down utterly, and sobbed for some time almost hysterically, her face buried in her hands. It was heartrending to the Rev. John to see his brave and strong little wife so broken down.

He put a trembling hand upon her shoulder, and stood looking down upon her wretchedly and helplessly.

"But we might save him the knowledge of this disgrace," she said, when she had somewhat recovered herself. "It is all we have a right to do, John, I think?" looking up to appeal for his approval.

"It must be, dear, if you can think so," meaning, of course, that she had everything to bias her judgment the other way. "But how can we keep it from him?"

"Who wrote to you about it?"

"About his death? Their lawyer, a Mr. Mead; you've just read his letter."

"The secret might be confined to him and Mrs. Tuck, if I saw her as soon as I can safely leave Archie. It could be ascertained if what we fear is true; and then the property might be allowed to pass to Ida, as though it had been left to her by will. Archie is certain to take it for granted that it has been so left to her, when he gets well enough to be told of Mr. Tuck's death. He is sure to wish then to go abroad—and to stay abroad, I am afraid," she added with a sigh, like a sob, given at once to the causes which might expatriate Archie, and to the exile itself.

This does not sound a business-like scheme of Mrs. John's; but it seemed to her, and, of course, to her husband, the best thing, or the only thing rather, which it was at once just, expedient, and promising to attempt under the circumstances.

VERY UN-NATURAL HISTORY.

THERE are several Natural Histories which profess to be complete; this professes to be an incomplete chapter of very Un-natural History.

Let us begin with the mammalia, and be learned and orderly. The lion's place in the books is occupied by the cat in folk-lore. She has nine lives; not literally—it is a poetical expression for her prosaic hard times. "Every dog has his day, and a cat has two Sundays," is an Essex saying—not hinting that tabby has a double share of homely rest, but that when a dog's "day" is a lifetime, a cat may be said to have nine days, and, counting from the first day of the week, two Sundays. The commentators on folk-lore unearth more than was ever in the country sayings; but so, for that matter, do the commentators on Shakespeare; both are sometimes like a boy digging and lifting on his spade the nondescript articles that tumbled out of his own pocket. To return, not to our muttons, as the French say, but to our cats—did anyone ever see a Cheshire cat grinning except Alice in Wonderland? Here come the commentators again, and say that Cheshire cheeses were once moulded into the shape of cats, with bristles stuck in for whiskers. Alas! this looks like upside-down wisdom. The cheeses must have originated because of the grin, and not the grin because of the cheeses. Others suggest that a sign-painter

once furnished lions rampant to the Cheshire inns, but painted so badly that the lions were mistaken for grinning cats. To show how a saying grows, this one is now stretched in some parts of the country to "grinning like a Cheshire cat chewing gravel." The last words are a rare stimulant to imagining the grin.

Irish cats chew something softer than gravel. They chew the succulent paw-dhogue. We apologise profusely to all Celtic scholars for the spelling of paw-dhogue. It signifies the wick dipped in tallow in the process of candle-making. Though juicy, it is tough, and not to be comfortably chewed without growling. A grumbling person is said to be "like a cat chewing a paw-dhogue." We must dismiss as tradition, with a spice of political meaning, the Kilkenny cats that fought till nothing was left but their tails, and also the Kilkenny battle of the cats of all Ireland, which took place towards the close of the last century. If we delayed over these, we might as well discuss Doldrum and Dildrum. Is the reader curious about Doldrum and Dildrum? He may learn—and take it for a fact, if he likes—that in the south of Lancashire a grave and elderly man was alarmed one evening by a cat, which came down the chimney, and said aloud, "Tell Dildrum, Doldrum is dead," and then went up again. The startled man told his wife as soon as she came into the room with their own harmless, necessary cat; whereupon the harmless, necessary cat, listening, exclaimed, "Is Doldrum dead?" rushed up the chimney, and was never heard of more. The ignorant pair had not known that this intelligent animal's real name was Dildrum, and that it was heir-apparent to the sovereignty of the cats, until then held by Doldrum.

This is hardly more astonishing than the lore we heard in all seriousness from an old countrywoman: "You can always tell when it is going to rain by the cat's eyes; the sight is big and round when the rain is coming, and so narrow you can hardly see it when the weather is fine." So can a trifle like the effect of direct light become exaggerated. It had never been noticed that the change in "the sight" takes place in a few moments.

Another saying is that white cats are deaf. Certainly some are not hard of hearing; and some animals of all colours are slow in coming to call. The most cruel mistake of all is that poor puss is attached to places and not to people; so

she is often left to starve in empty houses, though the attachment to places has been countless times disproved.

Lastly, before closing this section of our subject, another myth faces us. It is that Her Gracious Majesty is prepared to give fifty thousand pounds to anyone who can produce a tortoiseshell tom. This is as true as Doldrum and Dildrum. Tortoiseshell toms are most difficult to obtain, but specimens have sometimes been advertised for sale, and they do not even sell for hundreds, like the "purring piece of tortoiseshell," the cat with the "curious concatenation of colours," in the old ballad of Cateaton Street. But, on the other hand, let not the tale of Manx cats be dismissed as a myth. The island boasts actually a breed of Manx cats above the ordinary size, with long hind-legs and no tail.

To pass on to the badger. This is an animal with the legs on one side longer than on the other. The advantage is, that when he runs

Upon the plain, he halts, but when he runs
On craggy rocks or steepy hills, we see
None runs more swift or easier than he.

Did the seventeenth-century poet ever think what would become of himself if he had to run on craggy rocks and steepy hills with one of his own legs shorter than the other? The belief lingers to our time in the words "as uneven as a badger."

The pig is another remarkable animal.

Pigs can see the wind, 'tis said,
And it seemeth to them red.

Perhaps the colour of the wind was determined by the old name of the "red wind" for the wind that brings rust or blight; but how the pigs see it is beyond tracing. In the un-natural history of pork another fact is, that the marrow in Ireland makes one unable to keep a secret and in England drives one mad. In all swine there are five dark marks on the inside of each fore-leg. These are the "marks of Satan," since the destruction of the herd in the sea.

Bears go downhill backwards. No doubt they go down trees backwards like most animals; and facts expand in empty minds. Exaggerated description, too, feeds this popular science. What would not rustics believe of beavers after hearing the old description of London's penny sights, when Peacham touched off the portrait of

The beaver f' the parke, strange beast as e'er any
man saw,
Downe-shearing willowes with teeth as sharp 'as a
handaw

Another origin of wild beliefs is the literal acceptance of figures of speech. A Kentish farmer will say that cattle bought lean and turned into a good field will soon "tumble over their heads." He means, "double their price." Again, when an animal's keep is paid for, it may "eat its own head off." What wonders primitive credulity might make out of the expression!

To pass on to the birds, let us first consider that largest of bipeds, the ostrich, pictured in the popular mind with long neck and legs, curly feathers, and body about as bulky as a four-wheeled cab. There was an old story of the ostrich hatching its eggs by "gazing steadfastly" at them. We have got beyond that now, but not beyond believing in its trick of hiding its head in the desert sand so that its pursuers may not see it. This variety of ostrich, this arrant fool of a bird, is unknown except in un-natural history.

The pelican feeds its young with the life-blood from its own bleeding bosom. This is a beautiful mistake, that will live for ever in symbol and legend. The "real live" pelican has a large bag under her unwieldy beak, and digging with the beak toward the breast, she feeds her brood and soils her feathers with red-stained tit-bits of fish from the bag.

The nightingale leans her breast against a thorn, and sings in pain. In the old poets, not only has she a thorn in her breast, but she puts it there. Instead of being the voice of lonely love, she ought to be the emblem of those discontented people who, in a position enviable to others, first make their own troubles and then spend their lives in self-commiseration. Of course the nightingale is not such a fool as she looks in poetry.

Swans are said to sing a death-song; this is poetry too. But they are hatched during thunder; and this is prose—the belief of otherwise sensible folk. Crows and curlews hate each other so, that their eggs put in the same nest will all burst. Talking of eggs, the cock of the South of England lays an egg when the hen has ceased laying; it is a small insignificant affair with no yolk in it, clearly an amateur attempt. These cock's eggs are to be found in Sussex, if nowhere else. As we have got to the poultry-yard, let Job's turkey have a word; the Americans have the honour of discovering that ill-conditioned bird. They say "as poor as Job's turkey that had to lean against a fence to

gobble," but there we must leave him, as he does not strictly belong to us.

Swans, it may not be generally known, take to the water to hide their ugly feet. Woodcocks were once supposed to migrate to the moon. Geese—at least Lincolnshire geese—are marvellous birds with breast-bones that turn dark before a bad spring season. Cuckoo-spittle covers the summer grass in damp places; the bead of white froth on the grass-tips is called also "brook sweat," from a little green insect, named in country parts the brock; but though the little green insect causes the spot of foam, it is, of course, no more the effect of insect heat than of cuckoo bad habits.

"Nobody never saw a dead rook," rustics will say, "not unless somebody's been and killed un." Probably they evaporate like dead donkeys. Rooks may be seen "tumbling head over heels" before rain; that is, they make a downward flight like tumbler-pigeons. The "snoring" of owls at night is often talked of as the name of their peculiar noise, as if they fell napping in their very time of wakefulness. Against some of the popular names of birds we must likewise protest. In the West of England there are respectable feathered folk called Molly Wash-dishes. This bird is the pied water-wagtail—*Motacilla yarellii*. Bad enough for a hen of such a distinguished family to be called names; but even the cock-bird is Molly Wash-dish too.

Crocodiles no longer lure their victims with tears and eat them sobbing; yet the old libel still exists against the toad, "ugly and venomous." A disagreeable juice exudes from the round raised marks on the toad; but there is no evidence that it is hurtful. Scottish reapers say that in harvest-time "the toad's mouth is shut," and there is no danger—which shows that some of the venom is supposed to come out of its mouth and not from the skin. Another libelled creature is the earwig; yet how many thousands lie on green sward, and whoever found an earwig in his ear? The insect's name has been traced with probability to the Saxon "bud-dweller;" from the Saxon words that make it, we have also the ears of corn and the "wick" in names of towns.

Toads and frogs ought not to exist in Ireland. The song says of St. Patrick: "He gave the frogs and toads a twist, and banished them for ever." Some of them have got back again. In the very poetical folk-lore of Ireland there is a widespread

belief that the frogs are formed of the dew. Toads are not there; but their first cousins, the natter-jacks, are. The grasshoppers of the Green Isle come into the houses when summer is over, and getting smoked brown by the turf-fires, become the crickets of winter. These crickets are dangerous—omnivorous with large appetites; if you kill one, the other crickets will find your wardrobe and eat your clothes. This reminds us of the libel on the moth. People will not yet believe that large ones are harmless. "I must kill that moth before I go to bed," says the young man in the woodcut; "he is as big as a butterfly; if the little ones eat holes in things, that fellow would swallow my new trousers!"

The Scotch adder can suck down the lark out of the sky—"suck the larrack oot o' the lift." Certainly it has been noticed that the lark is not heard where adders are common. An English snake cannot die before the sun sets. This is inconvenient. If you kill one in the woods and bring it to your country lodgings limp and dead, your landlady will reproach you with bringing it in to sting the children, for it is not dead till sunset.

Horse-hairs in water turn into worms. There is a letter of Southey's to his brother, showing that he and Wordsworth were actually made to believe this by some boys who showed them the worms. No doubt the boys believed it too; and the truth underlying it is, that there is found in pools a species of annelides almost as fine as hairs, brown, with darker ends, and much given to wriggling when disturbed. Cow's hairs are as good for the experiment beyond St. George's Channel.

The stag-beetle is pelted to death as "the devil's imp" in Hampshire. The death-watch is another libelled insect. In reality it is only serenading its lady-love when listeners are alarmed; an imitation of the tick made with the finger-nail on wood will set the death-watch going. Again, another libel, "as deaf as a beetle;" the beetle is a wood-splitter's mallet; applied to the animal, the saying matches for wisdom "as mad as a March hare." The French say of a stupid man, "he reasons like an oyster," as if an oyster of ordinary capacity reasons. An American oyster might, such as the mollusc whose story was told to cap the fame of the London whistler—the oyster that a man in the States had, that whistled Yankee Doodle and followed him about the house like a dog.

In ancient days and far away wonders abounded. Travellers told of monstrous creatures as great as Sindbad's roc. Writers of only two centuries ago took up the more picturesque beliefs for figurative illustration, and told of the little ermine dying of grief when its fur is soiled, and the mountain birds turning white in winter through feeding upon snow. But our notes on Popular Un-natural History prove that we need not go far back, nor far from home, to find fabulous animals.

CURIOSITIES OF TRADE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

I HAVE had occasion just lately to look through a large number of the London and Liverpool Bills of Entry, and in trying to find what I wanted, I could not help noticing the many queer articles that are brought into the country. Now a large number of readers will know perfectly well what a bill of entry is. But there must be a great many who are not so well informed, and therefore, for their instruction, let me at once describe it.

This is a daily publication appearing at our chief ports. It contains the names, tonnage, number of hands, port of departure, etc., etc., of all the vessels arriving here the day before, and to each vessel is appended a description of its cargo in detail—a table of contents, in fact. Besides this there is also a list of all goods exported yesterday, with the place of destination, and a variety of shipping information generally. My concern, however, is not with our exports; it is imports alone with which I have to do. It will be understood at once that amongst these there will be seen by the merest inspection a vast quantity of goods whose presence there is a matter of course. Nobody is surprised to find that we receive from the United States, wheat, Indian corn, cattle, dead meat, cotton, petroleum; tea and silk from China; palm-oil from the West Coast of Africa; wine from France, Portugal, and Spain; currants from Greece, and so on. But there are many articles which, though considerable in the aggregate, are of less importance than these. At first sight they seem odd, but are not so in reality when we come to think over the matter. Perhaps some of these items will strike my readers with the same sense of queerness as they did me.

Who would expect, for instance, to find in the cargo of one of the magnificent New

York liners three thousand boxes of clothes-pegs? Yet such an entry is common enough. "Bless my soul!" somebody will say, just as I did when I noticed it, "are we dependent on the States for such things?" Pursuing my investigations further, I found that this was only one out of many of the same kind. It is evident, therefore, that it pays to cut down timber, convert it into the manufactured article, pay carriage to a port, shipping charges, freight, landing charges, carriage to inland towns anywhere in England, commissions to several—a score, for anything I know—intermediaries, in order that the British materfamilias may buy a dozen clothes-pegs for three-halfpence, which is what my wife tells me she paid last. I never saw the boxes as imported, but I should imagine they would be large, and hold several hundreds each—thousands, may be.

Does not this give us an idea of the enormous quantity that must be turned out every year in the States? I presume even there the washerwoman is not yet emancipated from the tyranny of the clothes-peg, and this being so, just fancy what a lot must be consumed by fifty millions of people. Yet they are able to supply, not only their internal demand, but to send them to us by the million. Likely enough they will send them as well to some other European countries, though the demand there will not be so great as here, if only from the fact that the weekly wash is not such a national institution.

One cannot help thinking what has been, is, and will be, the effect of this large importation on the home-made article. It is possible from such an insignificant standpoint as the clothes-peg to soar into the highest politico-economic regions. Are our native clothes-peg makers free-traders, or fair-traders, or protectionists, and if so, why so? and if not, why not? I pause for a reply! But none is forthcoming, for I don't know a soul in the trade. If I did I have no doubt he would glow with the fervour of his convictions. But the trade is, I fancy, modest and retiring in its nature; nobody ever hears of its grievances in the House, or through long letters in the Times. And yet the native clothes-peg maker has to live; it must be a serious question with him whether the trade is being driven out of the country by foreign imports, or whether it still defies competition. Perhaps the demand has outstripped his powers of supply, or perhaps

he holds his head up proudly, and asserts boldly that if you want a really first-rate article you must still come to him. Perhaps the trade has quietly died out and made no sign. I should not be surprised to hear this. If my recollection is to be trusted, the present clothes-peg did not make its appearance here till some twenty or twenty-five years ago. Everybody who can look back so far will remember that the clothes-peg to which he was accustomed was evidently a piece of a branch peeled, shaped, cut in two, and then bound together with two or three inches of tin, which were fastened by a bit of wire driven in. Such was what I may term the pre-American, or the antique clothes-peg.

I cannot assert with confidence that this ancient style has disappeared, for I confess that I do not keep my eyes open purposely to study clothes-pegs. But this much may be allowed: the antique is not prominent; possibly it yet lingers in out-of-the-way and old-fashioned places. In the centres of civilisation, however, it is conspicuous by its absence, its place seems to be taken by the modern article. This, as is well-known, is all in a piece, and might be pronounced artistic, were it not evidently made in a machine, and therefore, according to Mr. Ruskin, an utter abomination. How one thought leads to another. To mention a machine makes one wonder whether prices have fallen or advanced, since the American machine-made article came in. Flour is pretty much the same price it was then, beef and mutton, butter and cheese, are dearer, as everybody knows; what has been the effect on clothes-pegs? I don't find them in prices current, yet there must be a market for them somewhere—at Liverpool, I should fancy. If you want the statistics of the trade, where would you go to? The name does not appear in the Board of Trade returns. Can it be that the article is ignominiously classed under wood or sundries? The old Roman in the play could say that nothing that was human was foreign to him. Let me imitate him, and say that nothing commercial is insignificant to me. And yet I must acknowledge that clothes-pegs are not a leading or an important article. The great commoner could awe the House with "Sugar—sugar—sugar, Mr. Speaker," but I am afraid it would have laughed even at him if he had begun "Clothes-pegs—clothes-pegs—clothes-pegs."

It is unnecessary to tell my readers that

America sends us enormous quantities of wood, both in the rough and manufactured. The shapes in which the latter appears are numerous and peculiar at first sight. And here I may as well state that each of my illustrations is but a single instance out of hundreds and thousands similar entries during a year. The same steamer which brings the clothes-pegs carries also two hundred and eighty oars. Just imagine all these piled up against a boat-house; what a lot they would look! And where on earth do they all go to? Whence, too, should we have got them if we had not had the States to go to?

Still keeping to the States and to wood, what do I light upon next? Why, nine hundred and ninety-five maple rollers. What in the world can these be for? Think again, sweet sir; can't you guess? No, I can't. Well, I begin to think that Mr. Puff was right in saying that the number of people who give themselves the trouble of thinking is inconsiderable. Did you ever see a washing and wringing machine? Haven't wringing-machines rollers? Don't you remember, in your youthful days, seeing the process of wringing gone through by the washerwoman, usually assisted by one of the servants, and on blanket-washing occasions, possibly by the whole strength of the establishment? That, as you know very well now, is all done away with; the poorest cottager has a machine, and what used to be a severe strain on the muscles of the arm is now as easy as grinding an organ. Thanks to mechanical inventors, washing-day has been deprived of half its terrors by losing all its trouble."

Thus it will be seen that every one of us over thirty or thereabouts, has witnessed the origin and development of a new branch of industry, and one, moreover, which brings comfort to the poorest of us, a consideration not to be lightly esteemed. To whom occurred the happy thought of using in common life the appliances well known in large industrial establishments we know not, but, whoever he was, he proved himself a benefactor to his species. To go back somewhat, let us suppose the wringing-machine invented, we could not have supplied ourselves with the wood necessary for the rollers. With us sycamore is comparatively scarce, and of considerable value. The price of the rollers alone would have prevented the use of the machine by the working man, or even by the better class. For it must not be supposed that any wood

will do. Certain qualities are required, which sycamore alone combines in itself. It must be fairly close-grained, it must turn well, it must not warp in the transition from hot to cold, or from wet to dry, and it must not wear out quickly. Last, and most important, it must be cheap. Now steps in America. "I can give you all this; the maple, a sister to your sycamore, is perhaps the commonest tree in my northern and middle states, and fulfils all these conditions. Give me your orders, and you shall be well served, and therefore well satisfied." Hence the trade. After this disquisition, nobody will be surprised to hear that the next entry is fifty-six casks of handles. Wood again. Washing-machines, of course, need wooden handles, and innumerable other things want them as well. Here is an outlet for the smaller pieces—we shall see that every part of the tree is used to advantage. Short lengths, which are unfit for large work, such as rollers, can be converted into good-sized handles at any rate.

All of us know that "wooden head" is a term of reproach applied to human beings. It may be thought that we have already quite enough of them in the country, and the arrival of four thousand four hundred and eighty-two from America will be hailed with anything but satisfaction. But there is no occasion to grumble, on the contrary, for this consignment is merely intended to supply casks with heads. But this is not all. If we get heads from America, why not get staves as well? We do. One steamer from New Orleans brings us, amongst other goods, an assorted lot, comprising seventeen thousand seven hundred and ten pieces pipe, two thousand nine hundred and fifty-five pieces hogshead, three thousand five hundred and eighty pieces claret, four thousand one hundred and seventy-eight pieces barrel, and ten thousand seven hundred and thirteen pieces keg staves. Each of these five descriptions is of a different size from the others, cut to a regulation length, breadth, and thickness. The trouble of the English cooper is reduced to a minimum; if he has orders for pipes, hogsheads, or kegs, he chooses from his stock, bought in Liverpool, the requisite number of staves, which are already of the right size in every respect, and the proper number of head-pieces, which are also cut to certain well known lengths. He has simply to put the whole together, and fasten on his iron hoops. For these last we need not say he has not to go abroad.

But if it is necessary that his casks be bound with wooden hoops, for these he is to a great measure dependent on the foreigner. Enormous quantities arrive every week from Rotterdam; such an entry as nine hundred and forty bundles is of almost daily occurrence at London or Liverpool. Staves and heads form a very large article of export from almost all the North American ports from New York to New Orleans.

Charleston is best known to Englishmen as the great cotton-port; but it also holds high rank as an exporter of timber, in the shape of staves and trenails. Perhaps it may be as well to say that the latter are what may be described as large wooden nails, used in many operations of carpentry. Anyone who has ever seen a ship building must have noticed the big wooden nails projecting all round the hull. For such purposes a wood is wanted which must above everything be tough, and this quality is found to perfection in the locust-tree which flourishes abundantly in the Carolinas. We find in one steamer fifteen thousand locust trenails.

Does not everyone remember a few years ago how the British joiner was going to be ruined by the importation of doors, window-frames, and what not from Sweden and Norway. The native artisan, however, has gone on since then in pretty much the same way as before, and his trade is by no means extinct. One gets used in time to these lamentations, especially when one recollects that a great many men still living have known the whole country going to be ruined more than once. The import of manufactured wood from the Scandinavian ports is not yet at an end, and is further supplemented from a source still farther off. We find a New York steamer bringing two thousand five hundred and forty-seven doors. Another New York steamer carries ninety-four cases of spokes, and two cases of hubs—material here for a good many waggons or carriages, as the case may be. But my feeling is, that after the clothes-pegs, there is no room for surprise at anything, and, therefore, an entry of four cases of umbrella-sticks from Philadelphia passes almost unnoticed; simple enough from all their wealth of wood to choose the best-looking branches, and send them over to us. Bobbins, too, thirty cases of these create no surprise; but stay, what is the next item that catches the eye? Why, four cases of mousetraps. These must be some Yankee

notion, the latest patent, warranted to contain one or more victims every morning. We are dimly conscious of having seen in a shop-window somewhere a mousetrap all wood, into which no mouse could avoid falling, and out of which it could not possibly get; perhaps this was one of the lot, per British Prince, from Philadelphia. There must surely be in these some superiority of design or execution, or, however could it pay to send them so many thousand miles? One would think it would be impossible to compete with the home-maker in an article which is made from all sorts of odds and ends. Of course the States have also their odds and ends, and the mousetraps are a pretty good proof that they make the most of them. But there remains still an entry to show to what an extent they try to turn everything to advantage. What do you think of fifty-six barrels of skewers? Barrels, of course, mean flour-barrels; only imagine fifty-six of these full of skewers. Let me see, what are skewers used for? Oh, fowls are trussed with them, and only yesterday I had to utter an anathema on the cook for leaving one in. Butchers, though, must be the great consumers; don't we see in the shops sheep stuck all over with them? And that reminds me that many years ago some ingenious gentleman wrote to Notes and Queries to point out that Shakespeare was probably a butcher, or at any rate was well up in the technicalities of the trade, as he appears to have been with every other trade, on the strength of his having written:

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we will.

And to shape the ends is still the correct expression for the butcher-boy when making his skewers. I wonder if butchers still make their own skewers? Hardly, I should think, in large houses where they can buy them ready made, or be waited on by salesmen eager for orders. Depend upon it, the butcher of to-day adapts himself to the improved conditions of the times, and looks upon the days when he made his own skewers as we all look upon the times when there were no railways. Such is the march of progress. The butcher-boy no longer has his soul vexed at the thought that when he has carried out all the meat, and cleaned the blocks, and swept up, the remaining hours will be employed in whittling out skewers for the morrow. Happy boy! he

has nothing to do with skewers except use them, and if he knew where they came from he would bless America.

It will be difficult to imagine anything brought into the country much more insignificant than skewers, unless it were shavings, and I must say that I have not yet found that we import these. But I have found that we import large quantities of firewood, and from the form of the entry, I should not be surprised to learn that it comes in ready cut for use—chips, in fact. Entries such as forty fathoms firewood are common enough in the London Bill of Entry. This, however, does not travel so far as the skewers, it comes to us from Norway, and gives us an idea of the value we must be to our Scandinavian cousins, who thus find a ready market for what is rubbish to them. There they are wondering what on earth to do with their odd bits, here we are crying out for something to light our fires with. Somehow or other the two are brought together, and a further link welded in the chain of commerce, which brings all nations closer together. As everybody has heard of the enormous pine-forests in Norway and Sweden, we expect to find large quantities coming in, in all sorts of shapes. We are all acquainted with the Swedish matches, which are to be found everywhere. These, however, are not made from fir, but from the aspen, also a very common tree. One vessel from Gothenburg brings forty-one thousand nine hundred and thirteen props, nine thousand three hundred and forty poles, and one hundred and ninety-seven thousand eight hundred and sixty-six fir-staves. The first of these may cause surprise to many, but to those who are acquainted with the coal districts, it is a matter of course; they are used in enormous quantities for props in coal-pits. As to the next, one has only to think of building operations and scaffolding-poles, and there is no mystery in the matter. From Gothenburg also a vessel brings twenty-three thousand four hundred and thirty-six bundles of laths, and Frederickstadt sends us thirty-nine thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven pieces of flooring-boards. If any of my readers, therefore, wants to build, he will have a good idea where his timber comes from, but if he wants to fence his garden or his park, he must go farther, for I find part of a cargo from St. John's, New Brunswick, to consist of six thousand nine hundred and forty pieces of palings.

So far I am content to mention the commonest wood and wooden articles we import. It is unnecessary to do more than state the fact that of furniture, ornamental and dye woods, large quantities arrive from abroad. There is, however, no novelty or oddity in these. But there is an often-recurring entry which at first sight struck me as peculiar; the first one I met with was three hundred and forty-six empty casks from Alexandria, these, of course, might have held anything. But my suspicions were confirmed by the next entry, which was one hundred and eighty-nine hogsheads, one hundred and twelve barrels, and five hundred and fifteen kilderkins from Malta, consigned to Bass, Allsopp, and Worthington. There could be no possible mistake, they were empty beer-barrels, and these we know are to be found wherever Englishmen do congregate. An odd-looking entry, too, was fourteen casks of empty bottles, from Alexandria, consigned to J. Schweppe and Co. Nobody need be told what these were. It used to be said in the old overland route days that the path across Egypt could be traced by the soda-water corks lying about. Whatever may be done with the corks, the bottles at any rate get returned. One can fancy the Egyptian boy, in his leisure hours, amusing himself by prowling along the Canal looking out for empties.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

WORCESTERSHIRE

THE health-giving breezes that blow about the Malvern Hills have long been famous. As the old rhyme has it,

All about the Malvern Hill
A man may live as long as he will,

and no doubt a woman also. For Malvern Hills and the district round about has been rather noted for old women, many of whom were supposed to enjoy a power and influence that had their origin in Satanic arts. Even as late as the eighteenth century, many reputed witches could have been pointed out, and many a stout Worcestershire squire could tell the story of his dogs chasing a black cat, in which he recognised a neighbouring dame of his acquaintance.

But Malvern, with its suddenly developed greatness in the way of hotels, water-cure establishments, and boarding-houses, has, no doubt, forgotten its ancient superstitions. The old ladies find it more profitable now

to let lodgings, and wear out their brooms in lawful domestic occupations, instead of in traversing the fields of air. But there is still a weird, uncanny feeling to be had in exploring the ancient camps and deserted trackways that mark the lonely summits of the hills; summits from which a grand panorama is spread before the gazer's eye—the lovely valleys of the Severn and the Wye, and the spires and towers of three cathedral cities. Everywhere rich and well-cultivated Worcestershire is spread like a map at our feet—parks and woodlands, meadows, hop-gardens, and orchards, all blended into a deep glow of mingled light and shadow.

From Malvern the highway brings us to Upton-on-Severn, with its bridge over the river, which recalls many a tough skirmish for its possession—not the actually existing bridge, but its immediate predecessor—during the civil wars. Over Upton Bridge galloped in wild panic the Parliamentary troopers when they first came in contact with Rupert's Horse—a sort of Bull's Run for the Puritan party, the memory of which was to be wiped out hereafter in many a well-fought fight. And a different scene it was truly, although some of the actors might have been the same, when a handful of dismounted men crept on hands and knees, and throwing themselves into the church, sustained the attack of the whole Royalist division till the bridge could be hastily repaired, and the main body pass over. This was on the eve of Worcester fight, and had a material influence on the fortunes of that day.

On the other side of the Severn lies Croome d'Abitot, with its hall and park, the seat of the Coventrys; and the name of the place recalls the first Norman earl of the county, cruel Urso, "God's curse," as he was called by his own countryman and bishop. And Urso, probably, came from Yvetôt, in Upper Normandy, the seat of the comical little kingdom celebrated by Beranger, where the name of a neighbouring village, Ourville, suggests the family-name of our disagreeable earl. For the original Urso had, no doubt, been some savage Danish viking who had plagued the peasants of Normandy, as his descendant plagued the hinds who dwelt by Severn shore. And here is something to testify to the hereditary transmission of qualities, for no ruder or more ferocious freebooter than he settled as a curse upon the English land. The family came to an end in the next generation in an heiress, who married a

Beauchamp, and thus laid the foundation of the future greatness of the Earls of Warwick, whose emblem, the bear and ragged staff, may, perhaps, have some reference to the original founder of their fortunes.

But even more powerful lords of the soil, and certainly more civilised and beneficent, were the Benedictines, with their splendid quadrilateral of abbeys, Pershore, Evesham, and Worcester, with Tewkesbury just beyond the county border, but owning many rich lordships in its limits. Altogether more than a third of the county was under the rule of these stately foundations. And thus, what with the enormous possessions of the house of Warwick and the Benedictines, there was little room for other families to acquire great influence in the county. And in spite of the forfeiture incurred by the King-maker, and the evil fate of his family, the property was kept together till Henry the Seventh finally swept it up into the hands of the crown. Thus nearly all the families of distinction in Worcestershire at the time of the civil wars, were in origin new men, descendants of court officials and court favourites, enriched by the lavish hands of monarchs, at the expense of the crown domains.

Naturally enough, what with gratitude and expectancy, the royal cause was strong in Worcestershire, and when the civil wars broke out, the city of Worcester was one of the few municipal centres that went heartily for the King's cause, and earned for itself the title of the faithful city. Its citizens had suffered heavily for their devotion to the King, and endured a four months' siege before they finally surrendered to the Parliament. Two years had elapsed, during which the Puritan interest had been supreme, and still at the news that a royal army was once more in the field, and advancing from the north to assert the sovereignty of King Charles the Second, the mayor and chief citizens were ready to welcome the invading force, even though it was largely composed of Scots and Presbyterians.

For nearly a year Cromwell and Charles had confronted each other, the latter so strongly posted, with Stirling Castle as the centre of his position, that Cromwell did not venture to attack him, but was obliged to content himself with holding in a stern grip all the country between Firth and Clyde. Tired at last of this inaction, Cromwell drew in his force upon Edinburgh, made a bold dash across the Forth with the bulk of his

army, establishing himself upon the northern bank of the estuary, and crushing in the left flank of the Royalists, but also leaving open the road to the south. In making this movement, Cromwell seems to have underrated his adversary's enterprise, for Charles, seizing the opportunity, broke up his camp and boldly struck for the crown of England. The Scotch army crossed the border at Carlisle, and marching through Lancashire, carried Warrington Bridge, which was held by a handful of determined Cromwellites, and so by Shrewsbury to Worcester.

All this produced a considerable scare among the friends of the Parliament, who were disposed to bitterly reproach their general for letting loose this scourge upon them. But the citizens of London were staunch to the popular cause. Charles's proclamation was publicly burnt, and hasty preparations were made for defence. But Charles had by this time experienced the usual defect of his Scotch levies, who dragged at each remove a lengthening chain, and whose courage declined in exact proportion to their distance from home. And thus a halt was called at Worcester, where it was hoped that all who had the royal cause at heart would hasten to join the royal standard.

Many of the neighbouring gentry answered this appeal to arms, and Charles, who lay encamped, with some ten thousand Scots, about Worcester and along the western bank of the Severn, as far as Upton, was joined by two thousand English Cavaliers. But Cromwell was marching by the western route in hot pursuit, with nearly thirty thousand men, mostly war-trained veterans, whom their leader had moulded into the finest army of the age. Through Stratford, Evesham, and Pershore, the great captain swooped down upon his adversary. The iron net was soon cast about the royal army. The bridge at Upton was seized and repaired, and the Royalists driven into their lines at Worcester, and presently a bridge of boats over the Teme, where it joins the Severn, and over the Severn itself, within a pistol-shot of the other, united the two parts of the Parliamentary army. Cromwell himself, threatening the city itself, raised a battery of great guns at a point which commanded the one strong redoubt which defended the Royalist position, and which would soon become untenable.

At night the Royalists held council.

Without any great captain among them, and with an army vastly inferior in discipline to that opposed to it, they had, nevertheless, in their ranks thousands of brave and doughty soldiers. The leading Cavaliers, too, recking little of tactics or strategy, had their heads full of artifices of war, and cunning stratagems for taking or relieving forts and garrisons. What promised better than to sally forth this night with fifteen hundred stout fellows, well armed, with white shirts over their corselets, and in a vigorous camisado cut their way to the very tent of Sultan Oliver and slay him among his janissaries, and thus finish the war at a blow! This notion was hailed with enthusiasm; there were plenty of volunteers among the young English Cavaliers; but they talked too loudly and too long, and one William Guise, a shoemaker or tailor, overheard the plot, and contrived to warn the Parliamentary outposts. Thus the Royalists found their enemies prepared for them, and were driven back with some loss and little credit, and had to content themselves with wreaking vengeance on poor Guise, who was hung in Worcester market-place next morning.

With the morning the prospects of the Royalists were very gloomy. The heights about the city were crowned by the enemy's batteries, and in the western suburbs, where the attack was becoming warm, the Scotch troops, almost demoralised, were throwing down their arms. Charles, himself, watched the progress of the attack from the high cathedral tower, and judging from the hearty way in which the enemy attacked on the west, that the bulk of the Parliamentary forces were there engaged, he determined to lead out his forces in person, and attack the right wing of the enemy. With the King at their head the infantry of the royal army made a spirited attack upon Cromwell's batteries, and for a moment the attack was successful, the guns were captured, and the array of the enemy was broken. But Cromwell bringing forward his supports soon retrieved the battle, and presently the Royalists were flying pell-mell for the city, with Cromwell's men in hot pursuit. Charles had been dismounted in the struggle, and, borne away by the press of fugitives, was nearly killed or captured in the city gateway, where, as it happened, a waggon-load of hay, abandoned in the confusion, choked the passage alike for friends and foes. Charles, however, was drawn by friendly hands under the wheels of the waggon.

and presently, in all the tumult and confusion of the scene, the cry was raised through the streets of the city, "A horse to mount the King!" The appeal was answered by a loyal gentleman bringing forth a good horse ready bridled and saddled, and Charles, once more mounted, made a last and futile attempt to rally his men, and even appealed to them to shoot him rather than leave him to his miserable fate. All this time the Scotch horse under Leslie had not even been engaged, and they rode out of the town by the north gate in good order. Charles was urged to ride away in their midst, but instead, galloped away towards the west, glad, perhaps, to be free of his Scotch friends at any cost. Charles's escape by Boscobel has already been chronicled. The fugitive troops were less fortunate. Few of them reached the Scotch borders; for they soon lost military cohesion, and dispersing, fell an easy prey to the exasperated peasantry, who knocked on the head, without mercy, any helpless stragglers.

It is gravely told by a Royalist divine, that on the morn before Worcester fight, Cromwell ensured success by a compact with the Evil One, who granted him a seven years' lease of prosperity under, it is to be presumed, the usual terms. If it could be shown that the story was told during Cromwell's life, the coincidence would be curious, as the Lord Protector actually expired on that day seven years from the anniversary of Worcester fight. But it was also said that Oliver had been overreached in a very unfair manner, having stipulated for twenty-one years, or at least fourteen, but that the Evil One had basely altered the figures. "But what could have been his Satanic Majesty's motive in that?" enquired a steady believer in the supernatural and in the divine right of the Stuarts, of a learned but less orthodox friend. "He was in a hurry for the Restoration, no doubt," was the rather apt reply.

But what strikes one most in the memories of Worcester fight is the unexpected savagery of the peasantry. Honest Giles and Ned, kindly, slow-witted fellows, you might suppose, turned with the fury of a Jacquerie upon fellow-creatures who could not have done them individually much harm. After all, perhaps, we have here only a survival of the hatred of the Scot; a hatred that sometimes showed itself in stripping the skin off a dead Scot and nailing it to the church door. As at Durham, so even as far south

as Worcester, there are evidences of this practice. Tradition had it that the wooden doors of the cathedral were covered with Danes' skins. And curiously enough, not many years since, there were still remaining fragments of the ancient upholstery, preserved beneath the bars and stanchions of the ancient wooden doors of Worcester Cathedral. And these fragments were pronounced by no less an authority than Professor Queckett to have been revealed under the microscope as undoubtedly human, and of a fair, light-haired type.

Except for its cathedral, Worcester has not much to show in the way of relics of antiquity; but the tomb of an English king, even of such a worthless king as John, according to general repute, is something for the city to be proud of. But it is as the centre of a rich, fruitful district, with hop-yards, cherry-orchards, and pear-orchards—the apple is less grown than in Herefordshire—that Worcester flourishes in its pleasant, quiet fashion. Autumn brings the hop-pickers in long processions of country carts. Many of the pickers are dark, swarthy metal-workers from about Stourbridge and Halesowen, a race distinct and strange among the Saxon type of Worcestershire men, and with a distinct name, the Lye-wasters, marking a people who, men and women both, skilful at the hammer and forge, mingle little and seldom intermarry with the surrounding population.

Worcester itself has a considerable population of craftsmen, but these of the more delicate sort—makers of lace and gloves, of glass and porcelain, drawn from all parts of the kingdom, and on the whole prosperous and well paid. The china works, known over all the world, were founded in 1751 by one Dr. Wall, a famous chemist of the day, to whose skill is said to be due the composition of that frit body which made the early Worcester porcelain so excellent. No doubt many of the earliest workmen came from Bow, where china works had already been in existence for twenty or thirty years. In the following year, 1752, *The Gentleman's Magazine* notifies that "a sale of this manufacture will be given at the music meeting . . . 'tis said, at a moderate price." Eleven years later were issued those curious two shilling and one shilling tokens in porcelain which are now prized by collectors. But in no other way could the Worcester Company be said to have made money, and in 1772 the company was

reconstituted, and opened show-rooms in Gough Square, Fleet Street, close to where Dr. Johnson resided for many years. In 1783 the works were purchased by Flight from Hackney—probably connected with the old Bow manufactory. A few years after, a rival establishment—Chamberlain's—began operations, and against the royal visits paid to Flight, could set off a visit from the hero of the Nile, maimed and battered, with the beautiful Lady Hamilton leaning on his one sound arm. The result was a lavish order from the impulsive admiral, which was not finally completed when the battle of Trafalgar ended our hero's career. Many years after, in 1840, the two firms united, and the manufacture is still carried on by a joint stock company.

As a musical centre, Worcester can also boast of a long history. As early as 1724, the choirs of the three cathedrals had been in the habit of meeting yearly for practice in an informal, friendly way. From that date the meeting of the three choirs was made the occasion for a collection for clergy orphans, the result being some thirty pounds for the first year; and soon the yearly meeting became an event looked forward to and calculated upon by the musical world.

A few miles below Worcester the pleasant river Teme joins the Severn, at a point where Cromwell built his bridges of boats, as may be remembered. And the Teme, before it loses itself in the Severn, has passed through a pleasant country, flowing through a break in the hill ridge, that, as a spur of the Malvern Hills, runs northwards to Abberley; and below Abberley Hill lies the Hundred House, an inn, still the meeting-place of magistrates, which recalls the time when the men of the hundred met on the hill above in arms, while the camp on the hill may have seen the assemblage of all the county muster for the Welsh wars. In ancient days no doubt the hill overlooked the borders of a great forest, of which a fragment now remains on the northern border of the county, the great forest of Wyre, which probably gave its name to the city Wireceaster, and hence to the county of Worcester. In the midst of this former forest lies Bewdley on the Severn, once a royal manor with a palace, some time occupied by Prince Arthur as a hunting-seat—the Prince Arthur who might have saved us from Henry the Eighth, but who, unhappily, died in his youth.

Beyond Bewdley lies Kidderminster, with its fine church towering above the homes of the carpet-weavers. And here we begin to be drawn into the circle of smoke and iron, where Stourbridge flourishes, among foundries and glassworks, the latter industry said to have been introduced by refugees from Hungary and Lorraine, in the middle of the sixteenth century. And over the smoky region of coal and iron, Dudley Castle seems to hold a kind of feudal pre-eminence, claiming its share in all the wealth that is hewn out by swart miners from the bowels of the earth.

But from rural Worcestershire this industrial region is divided by the ridge of the Lickey Hills, with Hagley lying on their northern flank—the home of the Lyttletons—the British Tempe, according to Thomson, and

The hall in whose kind haunt
The hospitable genius lingers still—

a square and solid mansion, that has been a Castle of Indolence for generations of poets. The Lyttletons themselves have been a literary race, with something of a fateful, melancholy nature, that shows itself now and then in the family annals. The story of the white dove that heralds a death in the family, and of strange presentiments strangely realised, will be familiar to most students of the night side of nature.

Close by Hagley is Clent, once known as Cowdale, a happy valley among the hills, but with legends hanging about it of battle and slaughter, of which no historic record has survived. Here, too, if we may believe the old chroniclers, was Keneth murdered—the boy-king of the Mercians, at the instigation of his sisters.

At the foot of the Lickey Hills, on the old salt way from Droitwich, lies the ancient but decayed borough of Bromsgrove, with its colony of nailers, while, still under the shadow of the hills, is Redditch, where, under some subtle influence of surrounding conditions, the sturdy nail-makers are replaced by the neat-handed fashioners of needles and fish-hooks, and other delicate implements of sport and industry. We may follow the salt way to its ancient origin at Droitwich, where the brine-springs have continued to flow unexhausted from the days of the ancient Britons. The “wych” in the name denotes that the Saxons made use of the springs, and the “Droit” may denote the tax that the Norman kings imposed upon its produce—at any rate, we know of no better

derivation. But the salt-stream has also left its record in Salwarp, a village close by, and in the brook of the same name that flows into Severn stream.

A little more to the westward the streams begin to flow into the classic Avon, Shakespeare's Avon, and here, in a bend of the same river, lies Evesham, with the ruins of its old Benedictine abbey, that witnessed one of the most stirring battles of mediæval times. Ancient as is the foundation of Evesham, going back to the Saxon king, Ethelred, who gave the site to the monks, it is still, if popular tradition is to be credited, quite distanced in antiquity by a neighbouring village.

There was a church at Honeybourne,
When Evesham was but bush and thorne.

And it was from Honeybourne, doubtless, that the swineherd, Eofes, drove his pigs when he met that vision in the woods of the fair and shining form, that bade him mark the spot, that there a shrine might be raised to the honour of the Virgin. Eofes, perhaps, was a wealthy man, and able, like the swineherd of Lincoln, to give substantial help to the new foundation, perhaps helped with his own hands to raise the rude framework of the wooden church, and the wattled and plastered home of the infant colony. The grand Norman masonry that had risen on the site of the Saxon monastery was yet in its first sharp outline of newness, when the great event of its annals came to pass. Looking at its site, almost encompassed by the smiling but deceitful river, with its fertile soil and white-blossomed orchards, you would pronounce it a famous site for a colony of studious recluses, but a terrible death-trap for an army.

And a trap it was, in which was caught stout Simon de Montfort, whom competent authorities have pronounced the father of our English liberties. And yet the Earl was a wise and wary leader, the best soldier of his day; but that day was now past, and he was in the presence of a born warrior, a swift and sudden enemy, the future conqueror of the Welsh and the Scots. We have already witnessed Prince Edward's escape from his lax captivity at Hereford, and since then, with the aid of the Earl of Gloucester and Roger Mortimer, he had raised the men of the west to such purpose that Simon found himself surrounded almost and hemmed in at Hereford, where the Prince and his friends had been amusing him with insincere negotiations. Simon, however, had dispatched his son, the

younger Simon, to the south to raise the King's tenants, and meet his father, with all the power he could muster, at Kenilworth.

Kenilworth, where we now see the ruins of the stately mansion of the Dudleys, was then a great military fortress, garrisoned and provisioned by the prudent Earl as a place of arms and camp of refuge. And thus, while feigning an attack upon his enemies in front of Hereford, the Earl had secretly resolved upon a sudden flank march to the eastward, to join his son under the walls of Kenilworth. But the Prince had already been beforehand with him. Well-informed by traitors of all that went on in the Earl's camp, the Prince had divined his plan, and with matchless celerity darted upon Kenilworth with a handful of chosen troops, surprised the careless young Simon, who, deeming his enemy fifty miles away, had encamped in careless security without the walls of the fortress, and scattered the recent levies in hopeless flight. Edward was back again and watching Earl Simon before the latter broke up his camp; but once on the move the old soldier timed his march so well, that he almost outstripped the Prince, who was marching on a parallel line to the northwards.

At Evesham, however, there was fatal delay. Simon was encumbered by the presence of the king, Henry the Third, who, it is likely enough, had received his cue from the Prince to delay the march by every possible means. And thus, on approaching the stately abbey, within hearing of the sweet bells and the song of the monks, Henry commanded a halt, and proposed to hear a mass and dine with the abbot before proceeding farther. The Earl, it must be remembered, was entirely ignorant of the blow that had been dealt his son. He was almost within reach of his own strong castle, and he felt sure of being able to cut his way through any army that might oppose him, for his force, though small, was composed of the élite of the baronage of England, with their immediate followers. There is an old saying, existent probably in the days of Sir Simon the Righteous, that prayer and feasting hinder no man's journey, and possibly this old saw may have turned the scale. Anyhow, the little army marched over Bengeworth Bridge, and encamped upon the pleasant meadows lying about the abbey. There was a great feast that afternoon in the abbey refectory;

but while the barons were feasting, Prince Edward had come up by forced marches, and crossing the River Avon at Cleve, threw himself upon the only practicable road to Kenilworth. Then finding that he had outstripped his foe, the Prince drew his army back, recrossing the river at Offenham, and taking up a position on the high ground at the neck of the isthmus of Evesham. At the same time Roger Mortimer, who with his lances had followed by a different route, took possession of the bridge at Bengeworth at night-fall, and thus the old Earl was fairly within the toils.

At the first dawn of morning the Earl was aroused with the intelligence that there was a strong force in his front; it was thought that his son had arrived, for the banner of the De Montforts could be made out among the press of knightly pennons. But, alas! it was soon evident that the banner was insultingly flaunted as a trophy in the hands of his enemies. Then the Earl knew that all was at an end. "Heaven keep our souls," he cried, "for our bodies belong to our enemies!" But the brave old Earl did not wait for the attack; he charged with his friends up the hill, and was slain in the fight, as tradition says, near the well or spring that still bears the name of Battle Well. The King, who was led unwillingly enough into the fight, narrowly escaped a fatal blow in the *mêlée*, and when he was recognised, and taken to a place of safety, an indiscriminate slaughter began. Some of the noblest blood of England enriched the fields of Evesham that day, and the carnage was continued even into the sacred precincts of the abbey, and the church itself desecrated by human slaughter. As for the rout of common men, their bodies choked the stream of Avon, it is said, and the place where they vainly tried to cross is called Dead Man's Ait to this day.

"SEE NAPLES, AND DIE."

I LODGED at the Bristol, that hotel palace which crowns the rocky heights over Naples, placed on the stately parade of the New Corso Vittorio Emanuele, the ramparts of the Castle of St. Elmo behind. The glories of earth and sea lie beneath, and all the wonders thereof around. I look upon them when I wake; I take them with me to rest, as a dream, under the pale moon. Colour, form, sweet

scents, and musical sounds—all are here; and creature-comforts, too, in a magnificent establishment where, if Nature, in her loveliest mood, greets me without, plenty and splendour are prepared within.

Whichever way you take the Hotel Bristol, it is a palace. The saloons glisten with carving and gold, the hangings rustle with brocade. There are blue rooms, and red rooms, and terra-cotta rooms, and rooms running through the whole gamut of colour. A golden glamour in them all—on couches, chairs, and consoles. The great mirrors are encased in gold; the frescoed ceilings—supported by chased gold borders, candelabras, and girandoles—gold, and the rest en suite. The bedrooms are in pale pink satins and dove-colour, bordered and edged with gold; the retiring-rooms and boudoirs hung with amber, or painted in landscape-frescoes and wreaths of fruit and flowers. And there are the most delightful brass-bedsteads—an article for which Naples has a specialty. I never saw so many bedsteads in my life, as in Easter-week ranged along the street of the Toledo. The hotel is empty now, and the furniture enveloped, like a weary beauty out of the season, in dressing-gowns of embroidered muslin—for it is May, and the foreigners are gone, save a few, of whom I am one—but for all that it is a treat to wander from floor to floor, it suits so well with the soft creamy air, and the feeling of living in a legend or a dream.

Looking across the waters, quivering in fields of light, a longing comes over me to fly like a bird, or to leap into that turquoise sea, and float onwards for ever on those azure waves that wash the shore with foam. All sorts of odd sensations assail me, as I stand there, for I am drunk with beauty. It goes to my very brain. How vain are pen and brush to paint it! A scene that never can be old, but day by day comes to me invested with fresh youth and ever-present joy that Nature is so fair, and I am here to see it!

There is the blue-green point of Paesilippo piercing the dancing waves, alive with dark woods, white villas, gardens, towers, terraces—an architectural pot-pourri, incongruous but sweet, the undulating lines running upwards from the blue sea as if in haste, in a race of beauty, towards the rustic Pomero—a mountain confusion of pines, vineyards, ilex-thickets, olives, and gardens, out of which rise pre-eminent the Certosa of San Martino, and the dark-walled Castle of San Elmo.

The bay proper is lined with buildings, as many-coloured as Joseph's coat, over which rises Vesuvius, an insignificant mountain in itself, but weird and impressive from that curtain of dense smoke that lies lurid on the plain, and those fire-sparks and flames waking the dulness of the night.

Castellamare, a white drapery, lies opposite, towards which the towns of Portici, Torre del Greco, and Pompeii run in a continuous line of houses and villas all along the sea. Behind, in a blue mist, the sweetly-lined mountains of Sant Angelo tower over that heavenly-wooded nook, wrapt in eternal shade, called "Qui si sana;" the promontory of Sorrento stretches beyond, backed by rocky ranges, where brigands still linger; and, shooting upwards from the dancing waves, the purple peaks of Capri, all bristling with precipices and points, sheer out of mysterious shadows of sea-caves and grottoes. Be it under the pale moon, or in the ardent sunshine of a burning noon, veiled by silvery mists, or blazing in the full splendour of an amaranthan sunset, the actual present is always the best because it is perfect, and all is perfect through every change.

Naples itself is but an accident in a vast panorama—a glowing episode full of life and colour. There is no special charm in Naples, save that the great tinted blocks of houses seem to fit in with the people who live in them, being both gay, and garrulous, and trivial. But that they might be better architected, and less like great coloured trunks, no one can deny.

Nothing could be too fanciful or fantastic for a place where everyday life rhymes itself into a poem, with a wild rhythm in verse.

I see myself lazily looking down on peristyles of Grecian temples, colonnades, baths, and palaces, wreathed with fruit and flowers; I see pillared walks of state trod by a glittering crowd, under the glory of palms and frescoed walls; I see the gloom of sacred woods, enshrouding dread sanctuaries; the blaze of perennial blossoms circling tutelary shrines. I see the great ocean washing the marble shore on which tread gods. I hear the murmur of fountains and the rush of full cascades. The star of the white virgin-lily blending with my dreams; the ruddy red of the oleander twining with the rose; the feathery crowns of palm-trees, and a sky canopying all, clear as if cut from an opal.

Any phantasy fits in with what I see from

the hotel balcony—composes, as painters say, to suit the wildest sketch. But all this did not suffice me. I must explore the Bay of Baiæ, shrouded from sight by the high-running capes of Pozzuoli and Pausilippo—the Bay of Baiæ, which means the curving coast-line extending to Misenum, and the dolomitic heights of ill-fated Ischia, the ruins of Grecian Cumæ, Lake Avernus, and all those classic sites Virgil can tell of.

The morning was lovely—a crystal sea, a tender blue haze enveloping the highlands of Capri and the dark promontory of Sorrento, just the tips of the mountains emerging; and point after point of wooded headland stretching out to kiss the waves; a still, quiet air, laden with the perfume of mignonette and orange-flowers, violets and jasmine—sea, sky, and earth tranquil under the sun.

With a heart full of joy I rattle down the hill from the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, threading its many curves until I reach the farther end of the Chiaja and the Fontana di Leone—the only drinkable water in the whole city of Naples—the margin crowded with men, donkeys, mules, carts, barrels, jugs, amphoræ-girls, bare-headed crones with no hair, beggars, and stray yelping dogs.

Leaving all this turmoil behind, I dash into the darkness of the tunnel of Pausilippo, lighted by scanty lamps quivering before Madonna-shrines, all poetry, for the moment, knocked out of me by the agglomeration of horrid smells, among which I hail the stink of petroleum as at least healthy and of clear repute, among the nameless abominations which meet my nose.

Now daylight again, and ardent sun, and the long, white, aspen-bordered road to Fuori Grotta, like a ribbon beside the shore, each curve opening into vistas of new interest, until eye and mind droop bewildered.

The most interesting drive in the whole world, every object a memory. A heap of stones, once a Roman villa; a few broken arches, an imperial aqueduct; a group of dark architectural masses, of piled-up pillars, against which the sea-surf breaks, the attempted bridge across the bay from Pozzuoli to Misenum, begun by that brutal madcap, Caligula; every hill honeycombed with what were once classic villas, marble baths, dungeons, or subterranean chambers; great hollows dried up, once lakes teeming with tropical richness; the arid range

of the Solfatara and Monte Movo, altogether of lava, covering with volcanic death a fair region, blossoming in classic days with life and beauty; ruined walls, once pagan temples, glaring out of rocky rifts; the spacious amphitheatre of Pozzuoli frowning on a barren hillside, now a crumbling ruin, through which the fierce sun slants; ancient sculptured frontals degraded into squalid huts; the oozing mud of the Lucrine and Avernus lakes—once sylvan wood-seats—full of noisome exhalations; poverty, misery, and ruin everywhere stamped on the desolate shores of this once laughing Campagna—a wreck, an earthly corpse, upon which time, war, and volcanoes have set their mark.

The city of Pozzuoli, bathed in the waters of the Bay of Baiæ—the first Cumæan colony, and famous in the Second Punic War, as fortified by Fabius to oppose Hannibal, the scene of Sylla's debaucheries and miserable death; Cicero's "Pusilla Roma," Nero's "Augusta," Vespasian's "Flavia;" in old times a place of extensive commerce with Asia Minor and Egypt, frequented by the haughty patricians, assembled to riot or to bathe in the enervating atmosphere; its elegant temples dedicated to Augustus, adorned with arcades of white marble and senatorial statues, and its shrine to Jupiter Serapeon, where a Spanish palace came to be erected; plundered by Alaric, Attila, and Genseric; scourged by earthquakes and volcanoes until no man would live here, until Don Pedro de Toledo, Spanish Governor of Naples, employed Raphael's pupils to beautify it with frescoes—is now but a vulgar hamlet, beset with guides, ready to sell their souls for two francs, or to conduct you to Cumæ, Lake Avernus, or Baiæ.

One half-naked, walnut-skinned youth lifts his voice to say, "A franc and a half," at which, as spoiling the market, he gets jostled out and kicked.

The whole circle of imperial Neapolis and Virgil's classic localities for two francs—all—all! The spot where Nero compassed the murder of his mother, and she, the great Agrippina, was slain; Caligula sailed in his golden fleet of yachts, purple-sailed; St. Paul set his apostolic feet, hurrying to Rome; where the foul fiends rose, in Avernus; the Sybil's stern throne set before a tripod in the blackness of dense forests; where Æneas was led along the Stygian bed; where Cicero lounged in his pillared villa by the sea-

side; where Augustus loitered with Livia, lulled by the luscious breeze; and where his daughter, the vicious Julia, bathed, and invented new crimes—all for two francs! It cannot be counted dear!

The Bay of Baia, between Pausilippo and Pozzuoli, is full of islands. Nisida is one of them, an ancient volcanic crater, broken down on one side into a tiny harbour, with its castle used as a state-prison, and rows of pretty white bathing-huts below, where, in republican days, lay a villa belonging to young Lucullus, to which Brutus retired after the murder of Cæsar, and whither he returned to take leave of Portia before the fatal battle of Philippi, which brought back Cæsar's ghost to earth, as we all know who read Plutarch and Shakespeare.

Behind, rearing long sinister lines, Procida, and poor earthquake-torn Ischia, mixed up irrevocably in one mountain mass, the double volcanic summits of Ischia dominating the pile, into which join the rocky cliffs of Misenum at the extreme horn of the Bay of Baia. Misenum is, to all intents and purposes an island, being quite detached from the mainland by the "Mare Morto," the entire group cutting the azure sea into narrow channels, various, romantic, wild. There is no town visible, no village, no towers; a few straggling pines, and a little underwood—that is all. An abrupt turn in the road, and I leave the still waters of the Bay of Baia to the left, just at a point where the ruined temples, castle, and cavern of Misenum come into sight, and turn up a dusty, dry road through vineyards, the horizon of grouped up islands, as I rise, pressing themselves closer and closer together into fresh forms of beauty, with intenser lights and shadows, as the sun rises to its zenith. Anon Lake Avernus opens out to the left, joining the Lucrine lake, famous for its oysters from the time of Julius Cæsar, and large enough for Agrippa to use it for a mimic representation of the battle of Actium, now but a fosse ever since the volcanic eruption of Monte Movo swallowed up the land.

Avernus lies deep down, with sloping banks, once embedded in gloomy forests, terrifying the mind of man, now cut down and laid bare, losing all its mystic horror, and reducing it, at the present time, to the condition of an ugly pond, breathing malaria. The dusty road continues through vineyards, under the shadow of Monte Movo, all pumice-stone and lava, until I plunge into the coolness

of a rocky lane leading to Cumæ. On a rise the principal entrance breaks upon me entire—Porta Felice, of red Roman brick-work, surmounting what look like caves out in the tufa rock, but are in reality remnants of walls and ramparts. Porta Felice itself opens on emptiness, not even a city of the dead, like Pompeii, but blank blue sky. On a little side-path leading into trellised vines, a peasant is standing in the sun, clad in a knitted suit, of which each stitch and mesh glares out like mosaic in the ardent light, into which I, who had left the carriage, also pass, to become glorious in my turn. Before me stretches the western seaboard; no bay this time, but the open ocean sweeping along a golden strand of true Ausonian brightness to where the white cliffs of Mola di Gaeta and Terracina rise over purple waves. What an azure world mingled in many tints, from the paleness of an evening sky to the deep shade of mountains heavy with thunder-laden clouds, the delicate tinting of the cup of the blue flax-flowers to the harsh azure of mosaic or majolica; the blue-green of a cat's-eye to the calm fulness of a turquoise—all blues, with here and there burnished streaks as of sand-banks and motes, and light patches caught from the sun and thrown back again in fields as of glittering jewels on the waves!

"Down below," I hear a voice saying which makes me start, until I find it comes from the glistening peasant who has been watching me as I watch the sea, and now speaks in a horrible Neapolitan patois, pointing to a honeycombed mound of ruin far afield, "is the Acropolis." And then he lapses into silence, and my eye ranges over the site of what once was Cumæ, now a pestiferous marsh, long lines of pine-woods, like sombre ribbons, winding in between. The Necropolis of Cumæ is the most interesting in the world; a portion of the funereal vases are now in the British Museum. Whole families were found in the tombs, one skeleton covered with asbestos, in the remains of a robe embroidered in gold, the threads perfect; in another tomb was a suit of Grecian armour, now placed in the armoury of the Tower of London; false heads lying by the side of bones, with glass eyes, the features perfect.

Such is Chalcidic Cumæ—desolate with countless desolations—the last the Goth.

I proceed through the deep rocky banks of the same narrow lane, shutting out the

yellow bricks of the Porta Felice, tree-planted, and with ferns and hedge-plants in a grateful shade, the "Via Domitiana," as it is called, leading to the Lake of Fusano, along the outskirts of the farther side of Lake Avernus. A lovely lane through which the blue sky peeps—the indented sides wreathed with pink mesembrianthemum, and briony, and white may. A very ancient lane indeed, for we jolt over Roman pavements, and pass a ruined arch, said to be the remains of the Villa Cumana of Cicero, when he met "the young Augustus," in the age of youthful beauty his bust portrays—like modern Italians, these Romans had villas on every separate estate—and so into a tunnel as long as Pausilippo, stopping midway to gaze at some crumbling walls, called a temple to Apollo, and the Sybil's Cave—good names, but inarticulate as to fact, and most confused—with news of another tunnel farther on, along the shores of Lake Avernus, which I decline to view.

But what is not at all apocryphal, when we emerge, is a glorious sea-line on which the sun plays triumphant, all blue and green, in peacock tints; the delicate vines trailing on red rocks, the dark mouth of the tunnel we have left, and a glimpse at Lake Avernus, quite green and sylvan on this side, and sheeted with low underwood which should be forest—a very pleasant gate of hell, if hell at all; and a good modern road by which I benefit, the Roman pavement being most classical, but rough.

I believe I have forgotten to mention that I am on my way from Cumæ to Lake Fusano, inland by the lane, skirting these woods so filled with Virgil's landmarks, that I realise the Sybil as a fact, and Æneas as flesh and blood; but that the trees being all cut down, the mystery is gone, and the poem vulgarised.

I pass continually fragments of walls and reticulated work in brick. Again the road falls into ruin, and the wheels clog between rough blocks—here landing on a ledge, there deep down in a watery gully. Without a careful driver, and the meekest of steeds, we, too, should be ruins, we do so bump and scrape; an alce here and there looking down upon us from a high bank, and white caper-flowers to tell we are in the south. The air is sweet with cloves, the sun's rays heavy with beans. It is very idyllic, but oppressive, until air wafts to us from Lake Fusano; the port of Cumæ, also famous for its oysters, the flat banks covered with black ilex woods, out

of which opens a canal leading to the sea. Again Ischia's double volcanic summits peep out, tranquil now, and innocent-looking, pressing in over the pastoral landscape, and a pretty, pillared water-palace stands on the shore. A peaceful, quiet spot, built by Neapolitan kings, as a relief to the ever-changing historic names, straining the understanding to the memory of the past. A little turn in this pastoral district, then down an awful dip, straight into Baia, and the high-road to Naples which skirts the margin of the bay. On, by white houses gleaming on green rocks, broken into calcareous greys and browns, on which plays the rippling sea; beside temples and ruins, an inn with a vine arbour where we eat, and brown-skinned peasants and beggars, dogs, fishermen, and guides—an obligato foreground like a chorus in Masaniello, passing in and out as the action demands, giving one a feeling that they lurk behind the wings ready to emerge as the conductor's bâton waves the proper note.

Eighteen centuries have not washed out the beauties of "voluptuous" Baia, when "all Rome" crowded to it, and each inch of land was so appropriated by villas, that the last comers had to build into the sea. Every hillock bears crumbling walls, each rock cut with subterranean passage, baths, chambers, nymphæum—proof of the luxury of those degenerate days, when the very air breathed vice, and those Roman matrons, says Martial, "who arrived pure as Penelope, left with the reputation of a Helen."

There are the once lordly baths down by the sea; the still domed Temple of Venus, with vaulted roof; the Temple of Mercury and of Diana. An aqueduct, subterranean galleries, and caldarium, showing what a lordly pile it was; also the theatre, with long passages into the hill, and the remains of steps and outer walls, stucco and frescoes; the villa of Hortensius, out at sea, where his wife decorated her carp with golden ear-rings, and plotted his mother's murder; the villa of Julius Cæsar, where Octavia lived when Mark Antony of the red hair and Jewish nose forsook her for Cleopatra; and there is the dark outline of the desolate promontory of Misenum, under which rode the whole Roman fleet. Misenum, once a city, of which all has vanished but the line of causeway connecting it with its port, the "Mare Morto," and the most wonderful underground monument, firm and massive, as if just built; the Piscina Mirabilis, an aqueduct, two hundred and

twenty feet long in five distinct galleries, with stairs of forty steps each, up and down which I pass, amid dripping water, in wonder and amaze.

Looking out afar, on the cliffs of Misenum, a grand sniff of the ocean mingles with the sweet country odours; a drove of goats comes tinkling in to be milked. The horses which dragged me up sleep like their driver; an amiable cow, tethered to the pillar of a ruined portal, is solemnly milked; a group of boys arrive leading a snow-white lamb; a woman sells lemons on a board placed between her naked feet, her hands whisking fresh herbs to keep off the flies; another sits at a table with cooked pork and salame, side by side with tomatoes and capsicums; a girl works at a sewing-machine, with a rose in her hair; and children crawl about among the stones.

Then I drive back to Naples by the broad road, following the bay, in that mystic hour which is neither day nor night, when the sea-breeze lulls, and the waves lazily lap the shore; when the sea-birds, so noisy in the day, are gone to rest, and only the hoot of an owl or the croak of a frog to break the silence—the hour between the hum of the burning day, and the soft awakings of the southern night, when the stars glimmer out one by one, until the whole heaven seems sown with gems. Guitars tinkle in orange-groves, and the rustic lover steals out to meet the maiden of his heart; sturdy peasants crowd under the vine-arbours of wine-booths, and the old crones shake their bald heads, and tell dismal tales. Anon, the light of ever gay Naples comes into sight; the hum of a great multitude strikes on my ear; the echo of music runs along the shore; coloured lamps garlanding dark trees light up the night; and now and then a many-coloured rocket shoots into the sky.

There is a fête on the Chiaja in the Villa Reale, where palms fling huge branches, and magnolias grow in the shade, and I descend from my carriage, and mix in the crowd, ending my day as I began it, with a hymn of praise, "That Nature is so fair, and I am there to see."

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XL. AFTER THE RAIN.

THEY talked at first on their old subject of dogs, and especially about Wool, who sat between them, looking intelligently

from one to the other. Gerald would have liked to ask Theo what turns of road, and fate, and fancy had brought her into the middle of his colliery, the last place on earth where a visitor to Mr. Goodall might have been expected to appear; but for this very reason he felt a little awkwardness, and asked no questions. After all, he had not room for much curiosity in his mind; the charm and wonder of seeing her there drove out all other feelings.

Presently she began to remark on what she had seen outside; the furnaces, the clay-covered boys, the quiet way in which so much work was carried on.

"And are you the head of it all?" she said.

"I am the manager. I am paid," said Gerald. "My brother and another man are the chiefs of the concern."

"Do you go down the pit?" said Theo, "or do you stay all day in this room?"

"No," he said, smiling. "It doesn't look, does it, like a place to stay all day in? I go down the pit pretty often to see that all is right there. This isn't our best room, Miss Meynell. There is a better one inside; the clerks work out here; but it is locked to-day, and my brother has the key in his pocket. I wish he hadn't."

"This is quite good enough for a shelter from the rain," said Theo. "But you must be very glad to go home in the evening."

"Yes; don't you think it must be a degraded sort of life?" said Gerald, looking at her sadly.

"I was not thinking so," said Theo. After a moment's pause she went on: "How is your sister? Did she tell you how we met yesterday?"

"She could talk of nothing but your kindness. And from her description, and from the fact of your being with Mr. Goodall, I guessed who you must be."

"I was not able to do anything for her, after all," said Theo. "And is she going to live always with you?"

At that moment some one passed the window, and Gerald, without answering her, rushed out into the little passage.

"What are you doing in there? Are you ready?" asked a rather pleasant voice. "I have left Warren to entertain Ada in the road. She's awfully disgusted. She had better—What dog is that?"

Gerald answered with a few muttered words. Theo felt suddenly a little vexed with both him and herself; the shower had been nothing; though the office window

did not show much light, it was evidently over now. She got up, and walked out with her coldest and quietest air into the passage, encountering Mr. Litton at the door.

There was certainly a likeness between the brothers. Gerald Fane, when he was a few years older, might look as hard, and worn, and unscrupulous as this man, whose bold, shrewd, sneering face was still rather handsome, and not altogether disagreeable. Theo, though she looked at him, was quite unconscious of the slight surprised smile which greeted her as she walked out of the office door. Gerald was only too well aware of it, and his eyes flashed, but he kept his temper down, and introduced the two to each other.

"You are an old acquaintance of my brother's, I think, Miss Meynell," said Clarence Litton, as he and Gerald walked with Theo towards the gate.

"Yes," said Theo. "But I do not know this country at all, and Mr. Fane appeared at the right moment, and gave me shelter from the rain. You were telling me about your sister," she said, turning to Gerald. "Is she really going to live with you?"

"I hope so," he answered.

"A sister like ours is a great anxiety," said Mr. Litton. "We must try this experiment; but I am not sure that these two are not too young to take care of each other. Don't you think so, Miss Meynell, from what you have seen of them?"

"I don't know. I hardly think Mr. Fane would have left his sister for so many hours at the station yesterday," said Theo very quietly.

But she just lifted her eyes, and Gerald caught a glance which made him silently happy.

"I can't say what he might have done, but certainly it was wrong of me," said Clarence Litton. "But I had motives—I had ends in view; and even one's sister must give way sometimes to business arrangements; she may not be the worse off in the end; and I think she has forgiven me now. She ought to remember that she might never have spoken to you if it had not been for me."

"Oh yes—we were coming down into the same neighbourhood," said Theo.

"And you—" began Mr. Litton; but he checked himself, with a glance at Gerald, for the young fellow looked a little dangerous, and the end of his sen-

tence might have bordered on being impertinent.

It would be a fine thing to chaff Gerald about by-and-by, that opportune shelter from the rain, which, after all, had stopped almost as soon as it began; but with a girl like this, it would not do to approach within a mile of a joke on the subject. Mr. Litton had instinct enough to know that, though of late years his acquaintance had not been among very refined women.

As they came down the muddy road to the gate, Ada Fane, who was standing there with Mr. Warren, hurried eagerly to meet them. Her companion stood staring, and amusing himself with a low whistle. Gerald had never before felt so bitterly ashamed of him, or quite perceived what a repulsive object he was. He tried to stand between him and Miss Meynell, that she might not see him, and devoutly hoped that Clarence would not dare to introduce him to her.

"I did not expect to see you again so soon," said Theo, taking Ada's hand.

The girl was almost breathless with delight. She was entirely mystified; she could not imagine what had brought her friend here, but she looked from her to her brother with quick shy pleasure.

"Oh, Gerald, you were right, then; it is Miss Meynell, and she remembers you!"

With Clarence sardonically smiling in the background, Gerald could not help flushing as he answered:

"Yes; it came on to rain, and Miss Meynell happened to be walking through the colliery, and I looked out of the office, quite by accident——"

He stopped, flushing a little more, for nobody but Clarence seemed to be listening to him.

"I am very fond of walking about and discovering things," Theo explained, looking down into Ada's fair, wondering face. "I meant to discover you some day, but this is sooner than I hoped."

Mr. Warren stood by the gate and stared at her as she walked through. She did not even give him a glance, but, with the slightly imperious air which sometimes belonged to her quite unconsciously, she took possession of Ada, and walked on with her along the dismal black lane towards the railway. The three men found themselves left behind. Gerald walked apart from the others, with his eyes on the ground. Mr. Warren began grinning and asking questions.

"That's a fine young woman; where did you meet her, Fane? Does she take an interest in brickmaking? It's the same that came down with Goodall yesterday. A relation of his wife's, I suppose. Now I'm singular, I dare say, in admiring Miss Ada the most of that pair. As to you, Fane, if that's your taste, I don't wonder you feel yourself above your work, poor chap! I say, has she got any money?"

"He's sensitive, don't chaff him, Warren," said Clarence, having caught some mutterings under Gerald's breath, which conveyed hints of throwing somebody into the ditch.

"It's a pity if he can't take a joke," said Warren. "Tell you what, Litton," as the young man suddenly went on with long strides and overtook Miss Meynell and her sister; "that brother of yours is the worst feature in this concern."

"He does his work; we have nothing to complain of."

"He does his work, but he hates it all the time. He hasn't a bit of gratitude in his nature. Where would he be, I should like to know, if it wasn't for you and me? And he's got a nasty cross temper. That little sister of his will be an angel if she can put up with him, as she must for a year or two, I suppose."

"Thanks; don't trouble yourself about that, they get on perfectly well."

"I hate all that disgusting conceit in a fellow who owes other people the very rags he stands up in," Mr. Warren went on grumbling, on which Clarence burst into a short laugh.

"After all, Warren, he's my brother."

"Your half-brother, and you think a great deal too much of him for your own interests. What are they stopping for?"

After passing under the railway, the lane made a turn under some large oak-trees, beyond which lay a brown field of standing sheaves, and then the ground sloped up to another road and some red cottages, which were the outskirts of Deerhurst. The lane here began to climb, and the three young people had paused at the top of a steep little hill, where a footpath led back across a clover-field to the railway, and so up and along the eastern ridge to Woodcote.

"The short cut to Woodcote," said Mr. Litton, as he and his companion followed them up the lane. "Miss Meynell's best way back, which no doubt Gerald is going to show her."

"Meynell! Is that her name?" said

Mr. Warren, looking sharply at him. "I have heard that name before. I say—didn't one of those Norths marry a Meynell?"

Clarence Litton's yellow skin turned a little yellower.

"I think so," he said quietly. "It did not strike me at once; but I believe they are all dead."

"I'm alive, though," said Mr. Warren.

"Why do you remind me of that?" said Clarence, walking along with his eyes on the ground and his hands in his pockets.

"For two reasons. First, that you may not forget you have a friend capable of giving advice; and my advice is, in case of accidents, don't let those two charming young idiots of yours become intimate with that young lady. That's good advice, isn't it?"

"Well?" said Clarence coolly.

"Also that you may not forget all you owe me, and how I mean to be paid. I sometimes think your memory is getting short on that subject. It's an old bargain, though, and I mean it to be carried out."

"I don't forget anything," said Litton impatiently. "There is one condition, though, you must remember."

"Only a matter of form."

"I am not so sure of that," muttered his partner. "Well, Warren," he said in his usual voice, "don't be in such a fool of a hurry, and don't lose your temper. I thought so; here is my sister coming back alone."

Poor Ada had felt herself a little injured when Gerald told her she had better go back; a walk with him and Miss Meynell would have been so much pleasanter than one with Clarence and Mr. Warren, who would persist in staring at her and paying her compliments. But Gerald knew best; she was sure of that; and when he said, "Clarence will want you; you had better not come with me," she submitted at once, only looking a little sad as she wished Miss Meynell good-bye, and watched the two as they set off across the field.

Theo, who felt a real interest in the child, had asked her one or two questions in the few minutes they were alone, and had found out that life with her brother was not yet quite the bright thing she had imagined it yesterday. "The people that come to the house—business people"—Ada had spoken of these with a sort of shrinking, and Theo was conscious enough of the appearance of Mr. Warren to feel strong sympathy. Neither did she care at all for

the looks of Mr. Litton, and she thought that John Goodall's opinion of the two men was probably just enough. Gerald Fane seemed to her so very different, that the connection between these four became something queer, hard to understand, and interesting to the last degree.

She was dreaming of this as she walked on with Gerald, across the railway, and up the high open fields that led towards Woodcote. She could not very well question him about his circumstances, and he, not knowing how her thoughts were occupied, was afraid that he had bored her by offering to show her the way home.

But presently she looked into her guide's face, as he was helping her over a stile, and was roused to a smile by the sort of reproachful sadness she saw there.

"I was thinking of your sister," she said hastily, to explain herself. "You must be very fond of her."

"Well, you see, she and I have nobody else; and it's not much good my being fond of her," said Gerald.

"I am fond of her too," said Theo.

"Are you?" he said rather vaguely.

"That's awfully kind of you."

"Oh no, I couldn't help it. But now, as I have told you that, may I say what I think?"

"Thank you, if you will," he said in a low voice.

The things she said sounded so strange, so sweet, she looked so grave and earnest, and without the smallest affectation was so different from everybody else in the world, that he felt it was not only her beauty which made him literally long to throw himself at her feet.

"It is very nice for her to live with you," said Theo, and her slight emphasis made him flush and smile. "But if I were you—do forgive me, it is no business of mine—"

"Please go on," said Gerald very meekly. Then he added as she hesitated a little: "You only saw that man Warren as you passed him just now, but you think I ought to kick him downstairs. I should like to, but one can't always indulge one's self."

"No," said Theo, "I suppose not. But at least, if I were you, I should keep him out of my sister's way, if I had a dear little sister like that."

"You have no sisters?"

"I have no one at all, and perhaps that is why I am so very impertinent. Because I know nothing at all of you, or your arrangements—and possibly that friend of your brother's may be nice, though he looks rough; but I think, somehow, he annoys your sister, and you will agree with me that she ought to be happy."

"I wish I had the means of making her so," said Gerald. "But a fate pursues some people,—Miss Meynell; you know nothing of such lives as ours. I can't be happy, and I can't make her so, and unless we keep Warren in a good temper we may find ourselves starving. He gives me my work; I can't quarrel with him, or forbid him the house because Ada doesn't like him."

"I am so sorry," said Theo, after a moment's silence, for there was an almost passionate sadness in the young man's voice. "I am so very sorry I said anything at all. I might have known you would do everything you could."

The walk was very short, and they were close upon Woodcote. Gerald did not answer this last speech of hers.

"You know the way now," he said, "and I think Mr. and Mrs. Goodall are coming to meet you. Good-bye."

They were only a few yards beyond the last stile. Theo, at the moment, could think of nothing but her self-reproach. She let him go without a word. He was over the stile instantly, and half across the next field. She would almost have called him back, but John and Helen were really coming along the road, so she only turned her head and looked after him as he hurried away into the west, which was now all brilliant, the golden gate of her dreams.

"My dear Theo!" said Helen.

The words were a thousand remonstrances, while Mr. Goodall, too, looked after the young man, and coughed a surprised disapproval.

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BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXV. GRACE GRITTS INTERVIEWED.

MRS. JOHN was precipitate, perhaps, in her interpretation of Geoffrey Guard's letters to poor Tom's mother. That the letters were Geoffrey Guard's was unquestionable, and it was equally unquestionable that they were written to a woman with whom he had gone through a form of marriage. But, as even the Rev. John suggested, the marriage might have been invalid. It was not probable that the man, however hard pressed and reckless, would run his neck into the noose of bigamy for the sake of the second wife's fortune. Yet Mrs. John leaped at once to this conclusion, in the teeth of her abhorrence of its consequences.

The fact was, she had other evidence in her memory which confirmed that of the letters. She had been Archie's mother's dearest friend, and the confidante of all her troubles—but one. There was one Bluebeard chamber into which even she was not allowed to look, though she was allowed to know of its existence. Again and again had poor Mrs. Guard hinted to her of some incommunicable sorrow, which, like the rest of all her troubles, had been brought upon her by her husband, whom she had, nevertheless, worshipped. Mrs. John felt that now at last she had come upon the secret of this sorrow, and was thus predisposed to accept, as conclusive, evidence which was only very strong.

Before, however, she could act upon this evidence in the unbusinesslike way she had suggested to the Rev. John, Dr. Grice appeared. Having heard from

Mrs. John of Archie's illness, he had hurried off to see him, and became, of course, not merely medical, but legal adviser to his old friend. He had, besides, evidence of his own to give, since the Rev. John had got him to attend Mrs. Chown in her confinement, and he had some reasons for vividly remembering the case. It was impressed upon his memory, not merely by the ludicrous eagerness of the Rev. John for the instantaneous baptism of the baby, but also by the curiously marred beauty of the mother. She was very pretty, but had the most strangely contrasted eyes, one light blue and the other dark brown.

"Was she a lady, doctor?" asked Mrs. John.

"I think not; I should say, certainly not. Did she tell you that the writer of the letters was her husband, and the father of the child?" addressing the Rev. John.

"It was the last thing she said before she died. She asked me to keep the letters for the boy, as they might one day help him to find his father."

The doctor again compared the two sets of letters. There could not be the faintest doubt that they had been written by the same person.

"She'd hardly die with a lie on her lips; but the marriage may have been irregular. We must make sure of that before you stir another step in the business. Where and when did it take place; let us see."

The letters bore neither address nor date, but the two were in one envelope, with the time and place of dispatch and delivery stamped upon it. It had been posted in Colston about four months before Tom's birth, and was delivered in a place called Browbridge, somewhere in the North Riding, addressed to: "Mrs. Chown, care of Mr. Saul Easterbee, Red House, Browbridge, Yorks."

"That's her father," commented the doctor; "and her sister probably lives there now. A man with any tact could find the clue to the coil in half an hour's conversation with her, if she's alive. But it needs tact," he continued with a doubtful, or rather not a doubtful look at the simple and helpless Rev. John. "It needs tact; for, if the thing gets wind, it will defeat any negotiation of yours with Mrs. Tuck, should it be as you fear." Then, after a pause, he added decisively: "I shall go myself."

"You!" exclaimed Mrs. John.

"Yes, I. Why not?"

"But your patients——"

"I gave them a week's respite when I started. My dear Mrs. John, I merely took you on my way to town, where I've not a week's business, nor half a week's business to do. If I start at once for Browbridge, I shall be back here to-morrow evening, or the morning after at latest, and shall then have time enough and to spare for the little I have to do in London."

"I cannot decline your great kindness, doctor, for——"

"Tut, tut! Kindness! You're the last person who ought to charge any one with kindness. Besides, it's not kindness at all, but curiosity and vanity. I fancy I'm just cut out for this kind of detective business; I suppose because it's out of my beat. Is there a Bradshaw about, do you think?"

While Mrs. John went to look for a railway-guide, the Rev. John ventured hesitantly to suggest to the doctor that it was not their business to prove Archie illegitimate. But the doctor stoutly supported Mrs. John's idea of her duty. He was not, however, surprised that the Rev. John should differ from him, for he had an idea that parsons, from having to take so many things in a non-natural sense, acquired a kind of artificial conscience, which, like a diseased taste, could swallow what a healthy conscience would reject.

The doctor found a train which gave him time to eat something and to administer to Mrs. John such consolation as he could offer. He had not much hope of bringing good news back to her, and he did not think it wise to affect to be sanguine. The little, however, which he could say, he did say, to cheer her before he departed.

After a tedious journey he reached Browbridge late that night and put up at the best hotel in the town, The Black Bull. Before he went to bed he "heckled" the waiter on the subject of the Easterbee

family, and learned from him that the sole surviving representative in these parts of the family, a Mrs. Gritts—"Grace Gritts," as they called her—was as well known as the parson of the parish, though not so favourably. It was the current and charitable belief of her neighbours that she had poisoned her father for money and her husband for spite. He, the waiter, keeping well within the law, didn't say so, "for it warn't his business to say so, and them whose business it was, didn't say so neither. The crowner's jury found there was as much poison in t' inside of Job Gritts as would do for ten men; but whether she gev it him, or druv him to tak' it, they couldn't say, and the main of 'em was married men themselves." Where such experts feared to tread the waiter was not going to rush in. What he could say, however, of Grace Gritts without fear of responsibility or of contradiction was, that she robbed her sister of her share of their father's property—a matter of one thousand pounds and more—and then drove her out of the house and out of the place, no one knew where—on to the streets probably. Then she married for his money Job Gritts, an old man, but not so old as to escape having the little life left to him cut short by poison. And now she was the greatest miser in the country. She had heaps and hoards of money hidden away in the house, which was barred and bolted like a jail; and the only extravagance she indulged in was firearms, of which she kept a large assortment of all kinds loaded to her hand. Not that she feared robbers, for she hardly knew what fear meant, but she expected and was prepared for them. Indeed, only a desperate burglar would attempt the place, since it was not merely well fortified, but well garrisoned; for, though Grace lived in it alone, she was a woman of extraordinary strength, spirit, and resolution.

Such was the sum of the waiter's account of Grace Gritts. Of her sister he knew nothing, except the unsisterly treatment she received at the hands of Grace; but then, her sister belonged to an earlier generation than that of this young waiter of The Black Bull.

The doctor's curiosity was, as might be supposed, much piqued by this account of the graceless Grace, and he set out early next morning for the Red House with the expectation of an interesting, stirring, stormy, perhaps, interview with its mistress.

The Red House stood a quarter of a mile

outside the town in its own neglected grounds; for though Grace did the work of two men, it would have taken more than two men to keep the place in any order, and Grace both grudged the wages and feared the observation of hirelings. It was a dismal two-storey building of brick, every window blind with dirt and barred and cross-barred with stout rods of iron. Behind the house were half-a-dozen stark and starved trees, made gaunt by their branches having been hewed off for firewood; in front the potato-ridges came up almost to the doorsteps. At one side of the doorsteps was a dog-kennel, happily tenantless now; but in the generous days of youth Grace had kept a bulldog, which had died of starvation. Sometimes even now in her more genial moments she had thoughts of replacing him, and therefore the kennel had not been chopped up for firewood. On the other side of the doorsteps was a small manure-heap which Grace, in hours of relaxation, had gathered along the high-road. The door itself—there was but one, for the back-door had been bricked up—the door itself was not ruinous at all, but stout, sound oak, studded with nails, yet unadorned with a knocker, and unaccommodated with a bell. Therefore, the doctor had to knock with his umbrella, which he did with an apologetic gentleness, for he was determined to be soothingly polite. Instantly, and as though the doctor had touched a spring with the knob of his umbrella, a window over the door shot up. Hearing the sound he looked up into a wrathful and repulsive face, not haggard and hungry at all, but full, red, coarse, and heavy-looking, yet with a likeness in it, dim as a vague memory, to the pretty face of Mrs. Chown. The doctor politely raised his hat and began in a suave voice of conciliation.

"May I take the liberty, ma'am——"

"Nay, yo'll tak' no liberties wi' me, my mon," shutting down the window with the vicious snap of a guillotine.

The doctor blinked, confounded for a moment, as he stood looking up, hat in hand; then he replaced his hat, and shook with laughter. Certainly the bald head, bearded lips, and gross and grimy face of the woman made her retort seem to him somehow not apt. Having recovered himself a little, he meditated for some moments in perplexity about his next step. At last a happy thought occurred to him. Feeling certain that the ogress would keep her eye upon him till he was well off the pre-

mises, he walked down the steps and down the narrow path a little way, then stooped and affected to pick up a coin, which he rung on a stone first, and tested then with his teeth. Immediately the window shot up again, and the screechy voice screamed:

"That there's noan yourn."

"Eh!"

"Yon piece o' brass thee's samm^{*}med up* is noan o' thine. Aw belang it,† aw reckon."

"Then you'll know what it is."

"Aw kens who belongs it. If it wor thine thee'd noan need to test it."

"It's mine till I find the owner of it."

"Yo've fun' her nah, aw tell thee."

"I don't know that I have."

"Aw'll mak' thee know it, then. Aw'm noan bahn to be robbed by the likes o' thee."

"Robbed! I came merely to tell you that your sister, Mrs. Chown, is dead, and left—— Nay, you may just find it all out for yourself. Robbed, indeed!"

"Left! Stay; ye munnot goa. Aw'll be dahn in a wink. Dunnot goa. Aw'm a bit hasty," breathlessly.

Then she hurried headlong downstairs, but took some time, in the nervousness of her intense eagerness, to undo all the bolts of the door. At last she appeared upon the steps, the most singular and forbidding figure the doctor had ever seen.

"Coom in, wilt ta, an' sit thee dahn? Aw'm sorry aw spak' a bit rough, but aw took thee for t' road-rate."

Then she led the way into the kitchen, where a wretched fire was blinking feebly, lost in one corner of the grate.

"There, sit thee dahn," handing him the only chair in the place, rush-bottomed, rickety, and black with age and dirt. "Yo war' sayin' that my sister, Mrs. Chown, died and left summ^{*}."

"You are her sister?"

"Aye, aw'm her sister reet enough, an' all the kin shoo had aboon grand."

"She married a Mr. Chown—a Mr. Geoffrey Chown?" proceeded the doctor with quite a lawyer-like caution and formality.

"Shoo did; aw wor at the weddin' mysen."

"Then if you are her sister, and were at the wedding, you can tell me when and where they were married," looking sharply up at her, as though he doubted her statements.

* "Samm^{*}med up"—i.e. picked up.

† "Aw belang it"—i.e. it belongs to me.

"For sewer aw can. Shoo wor wed in Browbrig regèster-office, aboon twenty years sin. Nay, aw can tell thee date to a day."

Then, casting a searching glance round the kitchen, and taking up half a loaf and a cracked bowl of coarse brown sugar from the table, lest he might help himself to them in her absence, she left the room.

Presently she returned, bearing in one hand an old family Bible, and in the other a faded and shattered photographic album. In a blank page of the Bible she showed, among other entries, that of the marriage of Geoffrey Chown to Charlotte Ann Easterbee, with the date of the wedding, of which the doctor took mental note. In the tattered album was a photograph, taken on the wedding-day, of the bride and bridegroom, the groomsman and the bride's sister—a ghastly group.

"Yon's Chown, and that's my sister next him. You knew her, happen*? Him in the white waistcoat is Chown's friend—Smart, they called him—and that's me behind."

The doctor recognised at once Guard in the bridegroom, and his former patient in the bride.

"Yes, I knew her. She had something peculiar about her eyes."

"Shoo had. They didn't braid off aich other. Won wor brahn and t'other blue. An' soa shoo's deead. Aw thowt she mun be. An' shoo left summot†? looking with greedy anxiety into his face.

"She left—but I am not satisfied that you are the proper person to have it."

"An' who's a better reet to it than her own lawful sister, aw'd like to know. What wor it, onyhow?"

"It was a baby. She left a baby. You would like to have it?"

"Nobbut‡ a bairn?" in a scream.

"No; only a baby."

Do what he could, the doctor was unable to help smiling at the blank expression of disappointment and disgust in her face. Seeing the smile, it at once occurred to her that she had been taken in in some way. She was not long in imagining how. As her mind was always running on her money, she felt sure that the doctor was keeping her in parley downstairs, while some confederate upstairs was ransacking her treasures. In an instant she sprang

towards a loaded gun which stood in one corner of the fireplace, seized and cocked it. The doctor simultaneously sprang towards the door. She was too quick for him; before he reached it, she had gained it; but instead of facing and shooting him, as he fully expected, she sped past him and bounded upstairs like a tigress whose whelps were being carried off. The doctor, it need not be said, bolted with undignified speed, out of the house, through the garden, into the high-road, and for a quarter of a mile along it before he dared to stop for breath. Not till he had got to the out-skirts of the town did he recover spirits enough for a hearty laugh. Then, becoming suddenly serious, he muttered: "They laugh who win, but it's a Cadmean victory. However, I must make sure at the registry-office." Here he took out his note-book, and set down in it the date of the marriage as given in Grace's Bible.

Entering the town he found soon the office of the registrar, and, on furnishing him with the names and the date, got at once a stamped and certified copy of the entry. There was not the least doubt about the validity of the marriage. Unless, thought the doctor, Guard had married an earlier wife still, who was alive at his second marriage, but who died before his third, Archie must be illegitimate. This, however, to anyone who knew poor Geoffrey Guard, was not to be supposed; for a kinder-hearted man, and one less likely to play the part deliberately of a heartless Lothario, never lived. Nor did the doctor believe with Mrs. John that Guard had married either wife for money—not the first, for she had little or none, nor the second, for he was devotedly attached to her. He was, however, the weakest of the weak, and had in some incredible way, probably, drifted into each marriage before he well knew where he was.

This at least was the only plausible or possible explanation of his bigamy—for bigamist he was unquestionably—which presented itself to the doctor's mind.

SOME LONDON CLEARINGS.

IN passing from Cripplegate Church to Bunhill Fields, we seem to pass from one age to another; from the age of Milton to the age of Wesley; from the days of breast-plates and buff-coats, of stern-fighting Puri-

* "Happen"—i.e. perhaps.

† "They didn't braid of"—i.e. they were unlike.

‡ "Nobbut"—i.e. only.

tans, and old Ironsides, to the era of wigs and bands and Geneva gowns; from the rigid morals and unswerving faith of the former period, to the sentiment and feminine fervour and general uneasy palpitation of the eighteenth century. For here lie many of the Nonconformist worthies who had so great a share in the religious and intellectual movement of the century; here among this vast company that rest under the pale grey headstones in this desolate open spot, dark and gloomy in the glare of brilliant shops and brightly-lighted streets—dark and gloomy in spite of a chilly lambent glow that seems to rise from the thousands of tombs and headstones. A very crowd of headstones and tombs, like a flock of sheep pent in a fold with hardly room to move among them; a crowd that has a certain impressiveness about it, suggesting the crowd of witnesses in the old hymn. And yet the general aspect is of desolation and desertion, with the damp, chilly stones weather-beaten and decayed with the rank herbage, with the broad footpath, running across from street to street, which is paved with gravestones, and where the footsteps of passers-by, errand-boys with parcels, workmen with their baskets, women with bundles huddled up among their garments, and bands of roughts whooping and whistling shrill calls—where the footsteps of all these echo solemnly in the vaults below.

It is all a maze—a bewildering maze, while in the general cold glitter of the tombs from a patch of sulky sun-glimmer in the sky, the eye seeks in vain for some central object to rest upon. No temple, no spire, no solemn avenue of trees is there to crown the scene, and give unity to this forlorn assemblage of graves. And yet there is a central point of interest here if one could only discover it, for of all who visit this old Campo Santo, few there are who do not first turn to the grave of Bunyan; and, after all, the appearance of neglect and abandonment is on the surface only, for surely a constant succession of pilgrims year by year file past the tomb of him who wrote the *Pilgrim's Progress*; while from regions, even beyond those Caribbean seas where Robinson Crusoe is settled in his lonely isle, come those who recall the memories of childhood as they stand by the grave of Defoe. But it is all a maze, a maze without a plan and without a guide. We may as well turn away from the gloomy graveyard encompassed by the lowering mists and fogs of London, and seek the light, and life, and movement

of the busy streets. Happily, at this moment a guide presents himself, appearing suddenly from nobody knows where—one of the strangest-looking of mortals, who seems to have sprung from among the tombs. Whether he is some Old Mortality who delights in recalling the memory of the worthies who sleep round about, or is connected in some official way with the ground, does not appear; but, anyhow, he seems to know every inch of the Fields, and all this silent congregation of the dead.

With a commonplace guide half the interest of this strangely interesting place would be lost; happily our guide is by no means commonplace. From living long among the dead, he seems in some strange way imbued with their characteristics. How many eccentric souls have here found rest; and here is one of the band, who is still walking the earth! How many of the sturdy Puritan sort, who would bow the knee to no human power, have here passed into dust; and this might be one who has survived into this strange, unfamiliar age! And so we follow our strange guide, before whom yield the iron gates, and who brings us by a tortuous path among the graves to where John Bunyan lies, under a stately tomb. There in freestone effigy lies the great pilgrim with his book in his hand—a presence somehow familiar to us, although the features and salient parts, blurred and weathered by many winters, hardly give a notion of the vivid personality of the man as he lived; the tall, strong, burly man, with the ruddy face and sparkling eyes, his hair reddish, and even to the last only sprinkled with grey; such as he appeared on that rainy day, when, dismounting from his horse at his lodgings in Snow Hill after a tedious country journey, he felt the first throb of that fever which was to end his days.

Bunyan seems to us rather the countryman than the citizen. His pilgrims walk by miry ways, and over broad downs, where shepherds keep their flocks, through meadows, and across moorland wildernesses. If the author brings his pilgrims to a busy town, the townsfolk are in a hubbub about them, and mock them; while the celestial city is only seen afar off. And yet in his later days Bunyan's figure was tolerably familiar in London. He preached regularly in Southwark—in an open space near the Falcon—and people thronged to hear him, so that he could count upon a regular congregation of some five hundred souls. John Wesley's father heard him preach on

Newington Green. That he had many friends in London is evident from the number of people who attended his funeral, and from the handsome tomb that soon after his death was built over his grave. Twenty or thirty years ago this tomb, which had fallen into decay, was restored, but has already assumed a time-worn, weather-worn appearance. Stone probably perishes more quickly in a London atmosphere than under any other conditions, and, looking round at the headstones and tombs, it is evident that at the end of fifty years or so, inscriptions, unless renewed in the meantime, are mostly illegible, while in country churchyards epitaphs of the last century, or of even earlier dates, are often easily to be deciphered.

While we have been examining Bunyan's monument, our strange guide has been marching up and down excitedly, shouldering his cane like a sentinel on guard, and muttering and gesticulating. At last he approaches and beckons one of our party aside. "Sir, I should like a word with you," very solemnly and mysteriously; and then he goes on in a low, sepulchral voice: "Five and a half acres of ground. Six thousand tombstones, and a hundred and twenty thousand bodies." Then he shakes his head, gloomily mutters, "You are a man, sir—so am I," shoulders his cane, and resumes his march. But apart from the mystery in which this information is wrapped, there is a good deal of interest attaching to its subject. Five and half acres of ground—and a glance at the extent of the cemetery shows that the estimate is hardly exaggerated—is a goodly space in the heart of this crowded London. But the six thousand tombstones give a stony and desolate air to what might be one of the green spaces of the City, especially those memorials of the dead which have ceased to speak in any way of those who lie beneath, and which, indeed, are rather mournful reminders of the forgetfulness of the living. And yet the memory of the army of the dead who lie here encamped seems to forbid any rude, sweeping change that would deprive the ground of its almost sacred character and associations. Let us here pause for a moment over the history of this great city of the dead.

Bunhill was probably Bonehill, and there may have been some ancient tumulus, or early cemetery, to give it the name. But the "Fields" themselves were much more extensive than the present cemetery. Once

they were a large open space, extending northwards to where the Grecian Theatre now stands in the City Road, near which spot, in one corner of the fields, stood the Doghouse, as it was called—the City kennels where the Lord Mayor's hounds were kept in the days when he hunted the fox in Bloomsbury, and killed a hare in the precincts of St. Giles-in-the-Fields. Now, according to Stow, in 1549—the City churchyards even then being overcrowded—more than a thousand cartloads of human remains were removed from St. Paul's to Bunhill Fields, not necessarily to our cemetery, for it would rather appear that these cartloads formed a mound of considerable size to the north, near the line of the City Road; a mound that was subsequently utilised as a fort in the line of ramparts thrown up by the Parliament in the civil wars for the defence of the city. Perhaps, after all, this mound was the original bone-hill from which the name Bunhill is derived. Close to this mound, in after years, were opened the pits for the burial of the dead at the time of the Great Plague. Hence, no doubt, the popular opinion that connected the Bunhill cemetery with the victims of the plague. And, indeed, it is a fact that the place was walled in and consecrated as a City churchyard at that very period, to provide for the decent burial of those who died of the plague, though it is doubtful whether it was actually used for that purpose. Indeed, there is some direct testimony that it was not. But from that time the enclosed burial-ground began to be used by the numerous and powerful Dissenting communities, which, from the time of the Restoration, had decisively severed themselves from the Church of England.

Much of the land outside the City walls was under the lordship of the Church; a great part of Finsbury, including Bunhill Fields, belonged to the church of St. Paul's attached to the prebend of Finsbury; but the City of London had obtained a lease of all this in the sixteenth century, and continued to hold it for more than three hundred years, when through some oversight or misunderstanding, the lease was not renewed in time, and the property was about to fall into the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Already, in 1852, the ground had been closed against interments and the registers removed to Somerset House; and it was feared that strict legal rights might be exacted, and the famous burial-ground converted into building lots. This desecration was, however, averted by

an Act of Parliament, passed in 1869, by which the ground was vested in the Corporation of the City of London, to be preserved as an open space and recreation-ground for the public benefit. As a recreation-ground, indeed, the Bunhill Fields figure in the list of public places of the kind. But this description must not be taken too literally. Any persons seeking recreation here must be prepared to take their pleasure sadly.

But our guide is waiting for us impatiently, still muttering and talking to himself, and every now and then dispersing small groups of boys who have assembled at the sight of people wandering about among the tombs. And then our friend leads us here and there, interjecting a name at one tomb or another, with the question; "Heard of him?" a question he answers himself in the same breath with a desponding shake of the head: "No, no; how could you? You're too young—you're too young." But, presently, with a triumphant gesture, he leads us to a square and solid-looking tomb, inscribed, "Richard Cromwell." "Heard of him? Protector for nine days, and his father for nine years. Ah, you've heard of him. He was a man, so are you, and so am I." Our friend is fond of reminding us of this common humanity, which is, perhaps, rather flattering when associated with such names as the Cromwells. According to local historians, Richard Cromwell, the whilom Protector, is buried at Cheshunt; still, it is quite possible that zealous surviving friends may have brought the body to London to lie among his father's friends and kinsmen. There is a tomb to Henry Cromwell, too, close by, and both of these were discovered seven feet below the existing surface level—a curious fact, and one that leads to the belief that many other memorials of the worthies of the seventeenth century may lie buried among subsequent accretions.

But of the Cromwellian period there are many well-known worthies here reposing, among others Dr. John Owen, chaplain to the Lord Protector, and Colonel Charles Fleetwood, whose first wife was Cromwell's daughter, with Colonel Blenner Haysett, "a lover of arms and of Christian and English liberties." Of a later period are a whole crowd of Independent divines, from the days of King James even, to those of Queen Victoria; of Presbyterians too, and Baptists, and Unitarians, a long catalogue of names, which our guide repeats in almost despairing accents, as not one of

them elicits a distinct flash of intelligence on our part. "You don't know him! How should you? You're too young." At length Dr. Isaac Watts, under a handsome square tomb, elicits a show of recognition. "Ah, you know him? 'How doth the little busy bee improve each shining hour.'"

But, alas! the hour is anything but shining—damp and lowering, on the contrary, and the long, dank grass, and the cold, grey tombs, inspire a longing to reach the terra-firma of the pavement again. Else we might have sought out the tomb of William Blake, memorable for his nightmare fancies with pencil and graver, and Stothart, of less eccentric fame. And here is the family grave of the Grimaldis—not that the celebrated Joe is among them, but the father of him, probably the one who in the Gordon Riots, when householders were obliged to write "No Popery" on their walls, under pain of wreckage by the mob, with comprehensive liberality chalked up "No religion at all!" which, as it happened, was taken in good part. And then our guide points out with a mysterious air a square, solid tomb, which seems to indicate as plainly as such an object can, family respectability and substance: "Henry Fauntleroy, banker, hanged for forgery. Heard of him?" Truly here was the family vault of the Fauntleroys, but whether the banker lies here, or in Newgate, is a mystery we will not attempt to solve.

Here at last is the tomb of Defoe, perhaps, after Bunyan's, the one most generally sought by the general public. The monument itself is conspicuous from afar in the shape of a tall obelisk of modern days, that purports to have been erected by a subscription among the boys of England. But there is something curiously inappropriate in this solid memorial to the ingenious and versatile pamphleteer. Swift, indeed, never equalled in dexterous irony the Short Way with Dissenters, for writing which Defoe underwent a sort of triumph in the pillory, while, in its serious detail, it is hardly possible to match the True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal, a solemn mystification designed to work off surplus copies of Drelincourt on Death, remaining in the hands of a friendly bookseller. From the Family Instructor, to the fortunes and misfortunes of Moll Flanders, nothing came amiss to Defoe. Something "Queen Anne," and rococo, would have suited Defoe to a nicety in the way of a monument, with a

basso-relievo of Robinson chipping away at his big canoe; but this Egyptian obelisk somehow crushes the imagination, and suggests only the Euston Road.

From Defoe we turn to another grave, that of John Dunton, his contemporary, and at times his associate, although the pair quarrelled fiercely and abused each other, after the fashion of the age. Dunton also was an author and prolific pamphleteer, but is to us principally known as bookseller and publisher. His interest to us centres in his connection with the Annesley family, whose records link the age of Milton and the age of Wesley in a very interesting way. Our young bookseller then, as he tells the story himself in his *Life and Errors*, attending one Sunday the chapel in St. Helen's where Dr. Annesley preached, was struck to the heart at the sight of the doctor's pretty daughters sitting all in a row in the high-backed minister's pew. Dr. Annesley lived in a solid, comfortable house just out of Spital Square, among the then open Spital Fields, to which he had removed from St. Giles's vicarage, a generous, noble-hearted man of fine, commanding presence, living in a free and hospitable manner, with quite a forest of olive-branches around him. Defoe has written his eulogy:

Solid, yet vigorous, too, both grave and young,
A taking aspect and a charming tongue,

while he thus alludes to his gentle birth and courtly connections:

Honour he had by birth, and not by chance;
And more by merit than inheritance.
As the gay world attacked him with her charms,
He shook the gaudy trifle from his arms.

Dr. Annesley's family responsibilities, however, were sufficiently heavy to account for his indifference to the gay world. It is recorded, indeed, that when the doctor's youngest child was brought to be christened by a brother divine, the latter queried how many this made; and was answered by another, "That he was not quite sure whether two dozen, or a quarter of a hundred."

To the father of twenty-five children the thriving young bookseller, with his solid dissenting connection—he had already published the works of worthy Mr. Doolittle, another citizen of our Bunhill necropolis—was not an unwelcome wooer for one of his many daughters, and Dunton himself, in his laced coat and ruffles, found favour in the eyes of one of the flock. In such a household, full of the stir of youthful

feelings, romance can hardly be wanting. Papa, that solid divine, sits in his high-backed chair and smokes his pipe solemnly—the great Nonconformist divines of the age are all great smokers—and discourses with the worthy Dr. Goodenough and others, and generally lays down the law on matters of faith and doctrine. But the girls about him, the Puritan maidens fresh and charming in the unruffled bloom of youth and innocence, do not receive all their impressions from papa. Passion and sentiment stir those dainty bosoms that perhaps throb fiercely enough beneath the snow-white kerchiefs. And neither Elizabeth nor her lover surely confined their reading to the treatises of Doolittle or Goodenough, but knew something also of the sentimental romance of the day. Thus the pair are Philaret and Iris to each other, and when the good doctor pays his yearly visit to Tunbridge, to take the waters, with Elizabeth in his company, Philaret writes constantly to Iris in amorous, impassioned strain. As to which the Puritan maiden gently reproves him. "Please to deny yourself a little luxuriance in your letters," writes Iris, "lest my father should find them." But what is more strange, this impassioned strain is kept up after marriage. "My heart, and dearer," Philaret writes to Iris on his voyage to America. For soon after the wedding Philaret sails for America.

Some difficulties caused by "the universal damp upon trade, which was occasioned by the defeat of the Duke of Monmouth in the West," an expression which shows how deeply the trading classes and its dissenting community generally had ventured against the present government—Defoe, it will be remembered, shouldered a musket in the West, and one of Dunton's apprentices was missing after Sedgemoor fight—some difficulties thus arising, sent Dunton on a trading visit to America with a cargo of religious books, for which he seems to have found a ready sale in Boston. Having opened a store at Boston, where the name of the Rev. Cotton Mather, the minister, recalls the original Botolph's town among the flats of Lincolnshire and the voyage of the pilgrim fathers, Dunton visited Harvard College, and opened another store at Salem, being well received by all he visited, no doubt from his connection with Annesley, who was universally known and respected among the descendants of the Puritans. After Dunton's return from America, we find him opening shop again under his well-

known sign of the Black Raven, in the Poultry.

And here, among the writers employed by Dunton, we come across one Samuel Wesley, a Church of England clergyman, but of a good, stout, Puritan stock, of which another branch, expanding the family name, afterwards became famous as Wellesleys, and now adorns the peerage as Earls of Mornington and Dukes of Wellington. But Samuel Wesley at that date was nothing more distinguished than a book-seller's hack, although not without hope of preferment from distinguished friends. Wesley's connection with Dunton was probably the means of introducing him to the Annesley family, and he soon formed an attachment to one of the sprightly daughters of the house. Susannah, the twenty-fifth child of Dr. Annesley, and therefore the heroine of the christening story, was a clever, spirited girl, whose refined and delicate features, as they are shadowed forth in portraits taken towards the close of her life, give evidence of early personal charms. As often happens in large families, the younger branches, wholesomely neglected, perhaps, or at all events not overpowered by parental solicitude, developed a considerable freedom and independence of judgment. Susannah, for instance, before she was twelve years old, had made up her mind as to the unlawfulness of schism, and by a not unnatural reaction from her father's opinions, seems to have become quite an untameable little Tory, and thus the young Church of England divine had a certain advantage in the young lady's eyes over other competitors, and before long courtship terminated in marriage.

About this time Dunton had started a new adventure in the form of a bi-weekly sheet, called the *Athenian Gazette* or *Mercury*. It was *Gazette* in the bulk, but *Mercury* in the single numbers, for the singular reason that as *gaza* signified a treasury, the former title was more fitted for the collected volumes, while *Mercury* was better adapted to run to and fro among the coffee-houses in the form of single sheets. This journal purported to be the organ of the *Athenian Society*—a more or less imaginary assemblage of wits and men of letters, to which Jonathan Swift was attracted in the early part of his career, but which was practically composed of Dunton and Wesley. The *Mercury*, except for a few advertisements and notices of books, was made up of answers to correspondents on

every possible subject, moral, amatory, scientific, and religious; and designed, as the original advertisement expresses it, "To answer all manner of nice and curious questions"—often more curious than nice to our more fastidious taste—"in Divinity, Physic, Law, Philosophy, History, Poetry, Mathematics, Trade, and all other questions proposed by either sex." The journal took well at first, and brought the Athenians into considerable notoriety. But Dunton, in his intercourse with profane litterateurs and in his platonic philanderings with feminine correspondents, lost his hold of that steady dissenting clientèle that had hitherto supported him. Then Dunton's wife died, and with her vanished all the strength and success of his life. Probably Elizabeth Dunton also lies in Bunhill Fields; but there is no existent memorial of her, and the classic epitaph, not without merit, which Wesley wrote for his sister-in-law's tomb, probably was not destined to be there engraved. Wesley accompanied the epitaph with the tart observation, writing six months after Elizabeth's death, that "He hoped it might not be wanted for an epithalamium." The tartness was justified by the event, for, soon after the date of Wesley's letter, the sorrowing widower married again. From that time Dunton's life was passed in broils and ignoble squabbles, and he died in 1733 in poverty and obscurity, but full of schemes and projects to the last.

This brings us to the tomb of the youngest of the Annesley girls, to many the most interesting spot in all this field of the dead; a tomb well cared for, bright and cheerful-looking, over which grows a solitary weeping birch, rather stunted, it is true, from the slips and cuttings that have been gathered from it by pilgrims who come hither from far distant lands. This is the tomb of Susannah Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley, and it may be said, also, the mother of Methodism itself. For it is the mother's spirit rather than the father's that seems to us to be embodied in this wonderful religious organisation. But between the days of Susannah's girlhood—in its fresh young life spent among the Spital Fields, and in the cosy society of snug City parlours—and her home-coming, as it were, to rest in the old City burial-ground so near the scenes of her youth, there is the story of a life to be told, of many lives indeed, sons and daughters growing up in the great barn-like rectory at Epworth. We see the

beginning and we see the end, and we can recall some mental picture of John Wesley preaching in the churchyard at Epworth, standing on his father's tomb. But we miss the link in the chain that brings back Susannah Wesley, in her venerable widowhood, to sleep among her old friends and kindred.

And then we are strangely reminded how the circle is completed. Our ancient guide has now led us to the extreme edge of the burial-ground, where steps lead down from this mount of sepulchre to the general level of the street. "Sir, I should like a word with you," the hermit hoarsely whispers, and then, with a wave of the hand, points out a square and solid-looking chapel, imposing from its size and bulk, while adjoining is a comfortable-looking red-brick house, where a spark of domestic life still exists, in the midst of shops and warehouses, indicated by blinds and curtains, and the soft glow of the domestic hearth. "I should like a word with you," repeats the ancient one of Bunhill Fields. "That chapel that you see over there is John Wesley's own chapel, and the house is John Wesley's house, and in yonder room, on the first floor, John Wesley died."

There is a dramatic fitness about this announcement, that rounds off our circuit of Bunhill Fields. All the more dramatic, too, in the surprise, for to us that great square chapel, with its minister's house in red-brick, had no more significance than any other building of the kind. But now the whole scene assumes a wondrous interest, as from the grave of Susannah Wesley we cross over to this Westminster Abbey of the Methodists, with its associations as one of the holy places of the faith; for in the quiet burial-ground at the back, is the tomb of John Wesley, while the room in which he died looks out upon the scene.

The history of the City Road Chapel, with its prosaic name and commonplace exterior, is connected in many curious ways with the history and growth of the neighbourhood. The origin of the chapel is to be sought in the pleasure-grounds of Moorfields, with their public walks and avenues, once enjoyed by quiet citizens and their families, but which in Wesley's time had become the resort of a less orderly crowd. Among this crowd Wesley began to preach, jeered at and mocked at first, but soon gaining the respect and attention of his audience. A

small dark man was Wesley, his hair evenly parted, with the neatness of the Oxford graduate, while his dress showed the care and precision of the episcopal divine. It is difficult to trace in his writings any evidence of the eloquence that moved the masses. Perhaps it was his exceeding friendliness, his sweetness of temper, and evident sympathy with his hearers that won the hearts of such multitudes. These meetings in Moorfields suggested the erection of a permanent centre of missionary effort. And so presently the Foundry was secured for the purpose. This was an old building which had once been the Royal Cannon Foundry; and it was in recasting the bronze guns that had been won in Marlborough's victories, that a terrible explosion occurred which wrecked the Foundry, and occasioned the loss of many lives. A well-known incident this, by the way, which led to a friendless German, Schalch, who had warned the authorities of what would happen from the dampness of the moulds to be employed, being at once put over the heads of the whole ordnance department, and made master founder.

Well, Wesley was now the master founder in the old building, described as a ruinous place full of holes and corners, with an old pantile roof, and a pulpit of rough timber. And presently the germs of existing institutions began to be developed, and Wesley had rooms fitted up there for himself, and for his mother also, who spent the last years of her life in the ruinous old building. To Susannah Wesley, her days at Epworth, and her married life with her strange, wayward husband, must have become dim and faded memories, while her early days among those very scenes came back, no doubt, with strong pathetic force. Then there was a school on the premises, with one Silas Told for a master, afterwards the zealous friend of the poor condemned felons in Newgate—a strange, visionary man, a wanderer over land and sea—something of a buccaneer about Campeachy Bay, and a slaver's hand on the Guinea coast; but who now was in his element as teacher and local preacher, with sixty boys and six girls under his charge to be educated, and afterwards put to good trades. There is no trace now left of the Foundry, which stood where is now the corner of Windmill Street, by Finsbury Square; but at that time, where the City Road Chapel now stands were open fields used as tenter-

grounds where weavers and calico-printers spread their cloths. And here presently Wesley built his chapel, all among the fields, to be reached only by a narrow, country-looking footpath.

Along this path on the dark wintry mornings would be seen flitting long lines of lanterns and candles borne by zealous members who came from far and near to Wesley's early services. And among these friendly souls the rest of John Wesley's life was spent; with many journeyings to and fro, but with this chapel and house as the home and centre of the new church. And here he grew old, well tended and cared for by ministering women, but with no woman to occupy that inner place in his heart, which in reality never had been filled. Wesley had married, indeed, but in haste, and with a woman of incompatible temper; he was too susceptible, perhaps, to feminine influence to be a good judge of feminine character; and although he had had love-passages in his youth—he had loved the charming Mary Granville, afterwards Mrs. Delaney—yet here as elsewhere his love found no resting-place, and in heart he was celibate to the last.

And here everything stands much as Wesley left it; the chapel itself in all its important parts, the vestry where he lay in state after death in his gown and bands; his home, with the old clock still ticking on the staircase; his old Wedgwood teapot, his bureau, and armchair, all kept as nearly as possible in its original state, and probably to be so preserved for centuries to come. And close by John Wesley sleeps his last sleep in the midst of his faithful flock, a saintly venerable memory for all time.

We are told that Wesley was buried early in the morning, between two and three o'clock, to avoid the crowds that might be expected to flock in dangerous numbers to the ceremony. But long before the hour fixed a forest of glittering lights were seen crossing the fields in all directions, borne by a crowd of mourners all touched to the heart with a sense of loss and bereavement, and when the solemn words of the burial service were heard in the dim night, at the passage where ordinarily is read, "To take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed," the officiating minister paused for a moment and for "brother" substituted "father," whereupon a low, subdued wail of grief and lamentation rose from the very hearts of those present. A pathetic incident

surely, that is worth remembering in the crowds of the City Road, and among the noise and brightness of London's nightly carnival.

BEFORE SAILING.

LEAN closer, darling, let thy tender heart
Beat against mine that aches with heavy woe,
Drop thy quick woman's tears to soothe thy smart,
Ah me! that I could ease my sorrow so!
But men must work, sweetheart, and women weep,
So says the song, so runs the world's behest;
Yet time will pass, and tender comfort creep
With hope in company unto thy breast.
Now ere we part, while yet on lip and cheek
Close kisses linger, clinging, passionate,
There is a farewell word love fain would speak,
A tender thought love labours to translate
In earnest words, whose memory through the years
Shall calm thy soul, and dry thy dropping tears.
If in thy garden when the roses blow,
Or by the shelter of thine evening fire,
In any winter gloom, or summer glow,
Thy soul floats seaward with a fond desire
(Fonder and stronger than thy tender use),
Think thou, "One longs for me across the foam;"
And if, sweet-falling like the evening dew,
A special peace enfolds thine heart and home,
Then say thou, dear, with softly-bated breath,
"In some lone wilderness beyond the sea,
Whether in light of life, or gloom of death,
My lover's spirit speaks to God for me!"
Kiss me, beloved, without doubt or dread,
We are not sundered, though farewell be said.

EARTHQUAKES IN ENGLAND.

AN earthquake is looked upon as a startling item of domestic news, although there is no very good reason why it should be, seeing that our tight little island has experienced its fair proportion of such visitations since our ancestors were frightened out of their propriety in 1101, by what William of Malmesbury calls "a horrid spectacle," when buildings, high and low, were lifted up throughout the land, only, however, to "settle as before."

Twelve years afterwards, a shock was experienced at Shrewsbury and Nottingham, but it does not appear to have been felt elsewhere, excepting so far as the rivers were concerned. Men passed over the Trent dry-footed, the Thames was fordable at London Bridge, and most of the larger rivers sank very low; the chronicler recording that a hard winter, with pestilence, murrain, and famine, followed thereupon. In the succeeding year another earthquake interrupted building operations at Croyland, the new work at the church there giving way, and the old walls cracking and bulging so badly that they had to be shored up till the edifice was roofed in.

Just before Easter in 1185, Holinshed tells us that there chanced a sore earth-

quake through all parts of the land, the like of which had not been heard of in England since the beginning of the world, for stones that lay couched fast in the earth were removed out of their places, houses were overthrown, and the great church at Lincoln rent from the top downwards. Strangely enough, the last-mentioned calamity is unnoticed by the local historians, who speak of the earthquake as a blessing to the city, by its clearing away a multitude of ruinous old hovels, which were a disgrace and danger to the place.

St. Valentine's Day, 1247, was made memorable by an earthquake doing much damage in London. In September, 1275, the town of Glastonbury was shaken into ruins, and upon St. Mary's Day, 1361, an earthquake, extending through all England, "greatly 'gan the people all affraye, so dreadful was it then and perilous." Twenty-one years later came the earthquake of 1382, when Harding saw

Castles, walls, towers, and steeples fyll,
Houses, and trees, and crags from the hill.

It happened on the 21st of May, and was followed by a violent commotion of the waters on the coast, the ships in harbour being driven against each other with great violence. A song-writer of the time says :

When this earth quok,
Was none so proud he n'as aghast,
And all his jollity forsook,
And thought on God while that it last.
And as soon as it was overpast,
Men wox as evil as they dead ere ;
Each man in his heart may cast,
This was a warning to be ware.
Forsooth this was a Lord to dread,
So suddenly made men aghast ;
Of gold and silver they took no heed,
But out of their houses full soon they past.
Chambers, chimneys, all to-burst [burst],
Churches and castles foul 'gan fare ;
Pinnacles, steeples, to ground it cast,
And all was for warning to be ware.

So far, we have not met with a single instance of earth-opening, but in 1571, according to Burton : "The earth, near Kinaston, Herefordshire, began to open, and a hill called Marclay Hill, with a rock under it, made at first a mighty bellowing noise, which was heard afar off, and then lifted itself up a great height, and began to travel, carrying along with it the trees that grew upon it, the sheepfolds and sheep abiding thereon at the same time. In the place from whence it removed it left a gaping distance, forty feet wide and eighty ells long. The whole field was nearly twenty acres. Passing along, it overthrew a chapel standing in the way, removed a yew-tree growing in the churchyard. With

the like violence, it thrust before it highways, houses, and trees ; made tilled ground pastures, and again turned pasture into tillage." Three years later, the counties of Yorkshshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, and Gloucestershire experienced a shaking, but little harm was done.

Elizabeth's reign was as notable for its great earthquakes as its great men, great deeds, and great events. On the evening of the 6th of April, 1580, London was frightened by a severe shock. All the bells of Cockaigne, from the great bell of Westminster downwards, clanged loudly and discordantly as the amazed citizens rushed in terror from their abodes. The churches were emptied of their congregations in no time ; the audiences streamed out of the playhouses ; and the Templars, leaving their meal unfinished, ran out into the street, knives in hand. Part of the Temple Church was thrown down. Loosened by the vibration, scores of the stones of St. Paul's fell into the churchyard ; and stones falling from Christ Church killed an apprentice and a servant-maid. So great was the consternation created that the Queen ordered the issuing of a form of prayer for the occasion, which everybody was enjoined to use before retiring for the night. No second shock, however, was felt in the capital ; but the towns on the Kentish coast experienced four in the space of ten hours. At Sandwich, four of the arches of St. Mary's Church were rent asunder. At Dover, part of the castle-wall was cast down, and portions of the cliff tumbled into the sea. Matters were as bad the other side of the Channel, the town of Montpellier suffering such damage that Queen Bess urged "the principal gentlemen of certain counties" to contribute liberally to the relief of those "of the religion" dwelling there — "God's merciful warning by the late earthquake being an extraordinary admonition to Englishmen to act with true Christian sympathy towards the calamity of the afflicted."

Shakespeare probably had this earthquake in his mind when making Juliet's nurse fix the date of the weaning of her charge by remembering, "'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years."

For more than a century England remained undisturbed by any internal convulsion worth noticing, but on the 8th of September, 1692, a shock was felt in the home counties, especially

at Sheerness, Sandwich, Dover, and Deal, the thick walls of the castle at the last-mentioned town being so shaken that the whole building was expected to come down. Evelyn, who was dining at Wotton, in Surrey, at the time, says: "None of us at the table were sensible of any motion, but the maid, who was then making the beds, and another servant in a garret above her, felt it plainly; and so did my wife's laundry-maid here at Deptford; and generally, wherever they were above in the upper floors, they felt the trembling more sensibly. In London, and particularly in Dover Street, they were greatly affrighted." The shock came during the hour of "high change," and the merchants rushed incontinently from their congregating places; the people left their houses to seek safety in the open streets, which were crowded with a terror-stricken throng, some of whom fainted from sheer apprehension. No serious damage resulted either in town or in country, but the authorities improved the occasion by enforcing the laws against drunkenness, debauchery, and using of profane oaths with greater strictness than they had done before the earthquake frightened the population into believing that the world was coming to an end.

In the opening months of 1750, the weather-mongers were puzzled by having to undergo tropical heat, and Londoners were alarmed by evening skies of fiery red, betokening, they thought, some impending calamity. Their fears were justified by a smart earthquake shock about noon on the 8th of February, making Westminster Hall tremble to its foundations, shaking houses in Holborn and Chancery Lane, and causing dwellers near the Tower to think an explosion had occurred there. Exactly a month afterwards, between one and two in the morning, the earth had another shivering fit. "I had been awake," wrote Horace Walpole, "and had scarce dozed again, on a sudden I felt my bolster lift my head. I thought somebody was getting from under my bed, but soon found it was a strong earthquake, that lasted nearly half a minute, with a violent vibration and great roaring. I rang my bell; my servant came in frightened out of his senses; in an instant we heard all the windows in the neighbourhood flung up. I got up and found people running into the streets, but saw no mischief done. There has been some; two old houses flung down, several chimneys, and much earthenware. It has

nowhere reached above ten miles from London."

The alarm in town was intense; nothing else was talked of or written about. Dr. Sherlock made it the theme for a pastoral letter, of which ten thousand copies were sold in two days. Pastors told their flocks the earthquake was a judgment on the city for its manifold sins, and the women at least believed them. Shrewd traders turned it to profitable account by selling earthquake gowns, for the women to wear while sitting out of doors at night; a quack got rid of his earthquake pills; and Turner, the china-dealer, having had a vase cracked by the shock, doubled the price of the set.

While the excitement was at its height, a soldier of Lord Delawarr's troop, turning prophet, announced a third and more destructive shock for the 5th of April. The "upper ten" were seized with an uncontrollable desire to visit their country houses, seven hundred and thirty outward-bound coaches passing Hyde Park Corner in three days, while all the roads out of London were crowded with vehicles of all sorts on the fourth day. Ladies of quality went beyond the ten mile circuit for the night, to play cards, intending, Walpole suggested, to return next day to look for the bones of their husbands and families in the rubbish. One heroic lady came up from the country that she might die with her friends. Those who stayed at home and went bravely to bed, were disturbed by reckless revellers shouting, "Past four o'clock, and a dreadful earthquake!" Nothing came of the prediction, and the unlucky seer was sent to Bedlam, although his wife assured Lord Delawarr that if he would have him examined by a sensible man, the trooper would be found to be perfectly sane. Before the country folk had done laughing at the cockneys, they had reason for becoming serious on their own account. Portsmouth, Southampton, and the Isle of Wight experienced a shock on the 18th of March; Yorkshire, Cheshire, and Flintshire coming in for one in April; in May Dorsetshire was similarly disturbed; Somersetshire's turn came in July; that of Lincolnshire in August; the series being completed on the last day of September by a violent shock felt through Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, and Suffolk.

Earthquake shocks were experienced in one part or another of England in 1852, 1859, 1860, 1863, 1868, and 1871, with no worse effects than the oscillation of a

few buildings, the rattling of window-frames, and shaking of tables and chairs. Even less alarming was the slight trembling of the earth felt at the little East Anglian village of Plendon, towards the end of February of the present year; the precursor of the most destructive earthquake yet known in English annals, if older chroniclers told all there was to tell. The ten seconds disturbance of the morning of the 22nd of April, 1884, was felt from London in the south, to Leicester in the north, extending so far west as the town of Northampton. In London nothing more serious than the stoppage of a clock, and the shaking of a building here and there, came of it, but the people of Colchester and the villages about it will long remember how their houses were unroofed, their chimneys overthrown, and their streets encumbered with the débris of dwellings suddenly rendered uninhabitable. Such destruction of property, from such a cause, is something new in England, and calculated to shake one's faith in future immunity from even worse visitations of the same nature.

SOME EXPERIENCES OF A COURT M.C.

SIR LEWIS LEWKNER, master of the ceremonies at the Court of King James the First, may, for aught we know, have had a pleasant time of it, seeing that the burden of the office fell upon the shoulders of his deputy or assistant, who has left us a record of his trials and troubles in a little book entitled *Finetti and Philoxenis*; some choice observations of Sir John Finett, Knight, touching the reception and precedence, the treatment and audience, the punctillos and contests of foreign ambassadors in England. Whatever the knight's emoluments may have been, they were hardly earned, for his life was well-nigh worried out of him with settling questions of precedence and etiquette, allaying petty jealousies, and keeping the representatives of foreign princes on something like peaceable terms with one another.

The Court festivities consequent upon the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth to the Count Palatine, in 1613, extended over several days. Sir John Finett invited M. de Boiscot, the archduke's ambassador, to honour the second or third day's merry-makings with his presence; an invitation he received with a troubled countenance, and the complaint that the Venetian

ambassador had been asked to the nuptials, and other ambassadors had been invited to attend at masques alone, an honour never paid to him. Not that he would demur, on his own account, even if called upon to wait at the royal table, but as the representative of so great a Prince, one who could not allow a thought of any competition between a monarchical sovereign and a small republic governed by a sort of burghers, he must decline attending the solemnities. After letting him sulk a while, King James wrote to M. de Boiscot with his own hand, explaining that the Venetian envoy owed his wedding invitation to the fact that he was the first to congratulate his majesty on the happy event, and had put his men in new liveries in honour thereof, a compliment no Prince had paid him. Furthermore, James pointed out that one day was equal to another in dignity, and that it had always been customary to couple together the representatives of France and Venice, and those of Austria and Spain.

Sir Noel Caron, the ambassador from the United Provinces, wisely scorned troubling himself about such trifles, and his wisdom was rewarded by his being asked to attend the festivities from beginning to end. On the other hand, the French ambassador was so arrogant in his pretensions as actually to demand precedence of the heir to the crown; while the Venetian ambassador protested against sitting on a stool at the banqueting-table, although no persons were accommodated with chairs save the bride and bridegroom. Neither Frenchman or Venetian, however, prevailed in their reasonless pretences.

Upon the king determining that the ambassadors of Spain and Austria should figure among the guests at the Earl of Somerset's wedding, Finett had to invite the others too, with the understanding that they excused themselves. The Venetian readily agreed, and the Frenchman prayed to be excused on the plea of a diffusion of rheum into his teeth and the expected return of a fit of the ague. But Sir John had no sooner taken leave of the latter than he of Venice insisted upon seeing him, to complain that the Frenchman had been vouchsafed a solemn invitation; his anger only being appeased by Finett inviting him over again in exactly the same words as he had used to his rival. Then he wanted to know if the Austrian had been invited. Sir John affected ignorance, whereupon the Italian said he was dissembling, and he doubted not he

was going straightway to the Austrian's lodging. Finett left him to think so, "holding it ill manners to mar a belief of an ambassador's making."

By-and-by there was another marriage at Court, and then came the turn of the two ambassadors previously left out in the cold; but the French envoy must needs ride the high horse again. He would make one at the supper and after-entertainment, but he could not come to dinner, he had already entered into his Lent, and two meals of flesh together would be too great a sin. He was assured there would be plenty of fish on the table. Then the reason of his surliness came out. The king, he declared, had shown his preference for the Spanish ambassador by inviting him to Somerset's wedding, and it would be wronging his master for him to march in the second place, as he would seem to do, if he appeared at dinner; nay, he would not attend the supper unless he had a chair, like the bride. However, he thought better of it, and afterwards bragged he had got the best of the Spaniard by dining in the company of the King, Queen, and Princess, which the Don had not done at the Earl's marriage-feast.

Troublesome they all were, but the Frenchman was the most unmanageable of the diplomatic crew. The Twelfth-tide masque of 1617 was to see Prince Charles make his first appearance on the stage; and as negotiations for his marriage with the Infanta had then commenced, the Spanish ambassador, naturally, was desired to assist at the performance. As soon as this came to the ears of the French ambassador, that touchy gentleman hurried to Whitehall, and demanding and obtaining audience, proceeded to declare he could show by precedents without number that the Spanish ambassador had never been present at any such entertainment without the permission of the King of France's representative being first obtained, winding up with a threat of making formal complaint to his sovereign of the wrong done to him in his ambassador's person. His vapourings were unheeded, and the irate envoy kept his word, sending his secretary post-haste to Paris, receiving letters of recall in due time, and thereupon departing the land, much to its ruler's relief. When Twelfth-tide came round again, neither France or Spain were represented at the English court, and taking advantage of the quiet time, King James determined no longer to admit ambassadors to sit

"under the State" with him, and ordered a seat to be made apart, "furnished with stools, cushions, and leaning-carpets," in the right of his own place, "but somewhat obliquely forward," and therein sat the newly-arrived Venetian envoy and the commissioners from the United Provinces.

Gondemar's coming to England in 1619 was followed by a revival of the old jealousies. To avoid any appearance of favouritism, the king invited all the ambassadors, great and small, to the tilting in honour of his birthday, providing separate seats for the representatives of France and Spain at the same distance from the royal one. The Count de Tilleurs discovered that his rival's seat was more in the public eye than his own, and nothing would content him but being allowed his choice, as his master could make no question of priority, which he would challenge and take as his due wheresoever. His pretences being scouted, the Count and his wife stayed away, and left the Spaniard master of the field. The lesser diplomatic lights acquiesced in being placed together at the other end of the tilt-yard, but unluckily the Bohemian envoy was called away to Gravesend, whereupon the Venetian ambassador discovered that if he were placed with the Savoyard and Dutchman at one end of the yard, while Gondemar was alone in his glory at the other, it would be derogatory to his quality; the first place of an inferior degree being worse than the last of a superior one. Finett got the Bohemian to promise to be back in time to attend the tilting, and thought he made things comfortable, when Caron, usually so easy to manage, announced that he was specially instructed not to allow precedence to any non-regal ambassador save to him of Venice, and if the Duke of Savoy's representative intended to be present, he should absent himself, which he did, although the Savoyard was unable to attend, much to the Venetian's discomposure, he suspecting the missing gentleman had insinuated himself somewhere near the King, and so taken precedence of him, which would necessitate his immediate departure from the country.

Of such bickerings about nothing, Finett has much more to say; but the crowning "clash," as he calls it, was between Sir Robert Shirley, the Anglo-Persian, and a real Persian, who disputed his credentials. Shirley had been duly received at Court as ambassador from Persia, the genuineness of the letters he presented being taken for

granted, as they were "un-understood for want of an interpreter—nowhere to be found in England." One day, Sir John Finett was notified by the merchants of the East India Company that another envoy had arrived from Persia, and taken up his lodging at the house of Alderman Holliday.

Shirley, Finett, the Earl of Cleaveland, and eight other gentlemen, went there to welcome the new comer. They found him sitting on a chair with his legs doubled under him, but he took no notice of their entrance. Sir Robert saluted him, and Lord Cleaveland, through the interpreter (from whence he came Sir John does not tell us), explained the object of the visit, getting no answer for his pains. Then Shirley produced his credentials, first touching his eyes with them, next holding them over his head, and then, kissing them, proffered them to the stranger, that he might do the same. But, rising suddenly from his seat, the Persian approached Sir Robert, snatched the papers from his hand, and tore them to pieces, and then struck the Englishman in the face with his fist.

Before anyone could interfere, the Persian's son followed his sire's example, flew at Shirley, and with two or three blows overthrew him. Master Maxwell, of the Bedchamber, and Lord Cleaveland pulled back their friend's new assailant, while Sir John Finett and the rest laid their hands on their swords, not drawing them because not any one sword or dagger had been drawn by the Persians. Upon Lord Cleaveland expostulating with the chief offender, the latter apologised, pleading that he could not control his rage against one who had dared to counterfeit his master's signature—which was always affixed to the top of his letters—and boasted he had married his master's niece. Shirley denied the last accusation, declaring he had only professed to have married a kinswoman of the King of Persia; and for the rest, it was that monarch's custom to affix his signature on the back of his letters when a foreigner was the recipient. The Englishmen took their leave of the Persian with little or no respects to him, but not at all satisfied with Shirley for taking his beating so meekly. Upon the affair being reported to his majesty, he ordered both the supposed envoys from Persia to return there with all speed, accompanied by Sir Dormer Colton, charged to ascertain the rights of the matter. When beginning

their voyage, the different ambassadors in different ships, they all three died on the way, and with them their quarrel and the enquiry after it.

Debarred from resenting ambassadorial impertinences, our M.C. rejoiced when freer men paid his tormentors in their own coin. Upon the arrival of the Marquis de Cadente at Gravesend, the Earl of Arundel went there to greet him in the King's name. Much to that nobleman's surprise, the French envoy awaited his coming at the stairhead of his chamber-door, and accompanied him no farther at leave-taking. Not brooking such discourtesy, next day he sent word that, as the ambassador was so great, and his lodging so little, he would not again be troublesome to him there, but meet him in the street to accompany him on his embarkation. He kept his word, the Frenchman never proffering his hand. When Denmark Street was reached, the Earl left his uncivil charge at the foot of the stairs, telling him the gentlemen above would show him to his lodgings. King James stormed upon hearing of the matter, not at Arundel, but at the Count, and he was fain to excuse his conduct on the plea of indisposition. The Duke of Buckingham took another way of becoming even with the Spanish ambassador for declining to appear at a supper given by the Duke, because his grace had also invited another ambassador with whom he was on bad terms. Buckingham sent Endymion Porter to the Spaniard's lodging with three "flaskets" of the choicest of three courses of cates to be served at the feast—one full of cold meats for the ante-pasto; another with fat fowls ready for the spit, of all sorts; and a third of the best and rarest sweetmeats—with the message that the duke would have held it "an honour and an happiness" to have had his company, but since he could not have it, he desired him to taste of what had been provided for him, and that at the tasting of it at his supper he would be pleased to drink the health of the King of England, as he, the Duke, would at the same time drink to the health of the King of Spain.

Now and again, the ladies gave Sir John Finett an infinite deal of trouble. The States ambassadress took umbrage at herself and her daughters being thrust into a corner at a masque, her wrath being noways allayed by the reminder that she had chosen to sit apart from the great ladies because she "wanted language," and, therefore, if she were unsatisfied, had only

herself to blame for it. At the Palatine marriage, the Lord Chamberlain directed Sir John to place the wife of the French ambassador beneath the Countesses and above the Baronesses. Standing to her woman's right, and possessed already of her proper place, as she called it, the Viscountess of Effingham would not budge an inch to allow the ambassadress to go above her; so, dinner over, the Frenchman called his lady's coach, but, after much persuasion, consented to stay, upon his wife being seated between the Countess of Kildare and the Viscountess of Haddington; my lady of Effingham "forbearing with rather too much than too little stomach, both the supper and the company." At another time, my Lady Dorset and other Countesses made a mighty to-do at the Countess of Buckingham setting her niece above them, by placing her "above herself and beneath her daughter the Marquess"—a proof, by the way, of the absurdity of the mode of spelling "marquis" in vogue in some quarters. Altogether, the post of Master of the Ceremonies at the Court of St. James was one to be eschewed rather than coveted.

CURIOSITIES OF TRADE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

THUS far into the bowels of the Bills of Entry have we marched on without impediment. The process has been prosaic enough; thoroughly commonplace have been the incidents on the way. But now the time is come when I must leave all these meaner things, and rise superior to that which ministers solely to our conveniences. Oh, that I had the genius of Pindar, to soar on eagle-wing far beyond the ken of the ordinary mortal! Only he could do justice to the theme which I am now approaching. Would that I had the soul of the poet! I would describe in glowing strains the ecstatic thoughts which chase each other through my entranced brain. But I have not the pen of the poet; the gewgaw fetters of rhyme, as the Hampshire farmer called them, are to me real clogs to progress. To be sure, an Englishman has the resource of blank verse, but I am afraid my blank verse would be only prose cut into lengths, like the staves about which I have already discoursed.

But what has all this rigmarole to do with our daily imports? Why, to serve as an introduction, to awaken a lively

curiosity as to what is coming next, to prepare the mind for something rather out of the way, which when it makes its appearance will create the interest which always attaches itself to undoubted worth. But I mentally hear, "Cut it short;" "Come to the point;" and, therefore, without further preamble, I find on board a West India steamer forty-nine turtle.

Does not everyone feel that we have now got on to an interesting topic? We all know that turtle are not found about our shores, we know perfectly well, therefore, that they must be brought here from somewhere else, and yet it certainly did look odd to see them down in the bill in black and white. I wonder how they are brought, whether sprawling about the deck, or how? An early recollection of mine is seeing them in an hotel-yard near Birkenhead in large tubs of salt water; perhaps that is the way they are brought over. But, however they make the passage, it cannot be doubted that they must be in poor condition before they get converted into the soup so dear to the alderman. Even if they are fed, which I doubt, they cannot get their natural food, and must feel keenly the change from tropical to temperate regions. The fact is, that good as the turtle-soup is, the name is a misnomer. Call it what you like, it is really very strong soup with some turtle flesh and fat in it. Conger-eel is said to form the basis, but, in addition, there is I know not how much stock, produced by stewing down veal, fowls, and ham. When this strong extract is prepared it is only necessary to add the turtle, and there you are. Real turtle-soup is only to be got where the animal abounds, and is of necessity a totally different thing from what we are accustomed to here. I know several people who have often feasted on the creature when fresh caught, and not one of them has gone into the ecstasies one would expect. But perhaps this is a matter of opinion. Mrs. Gill, who spent six months on the Island of Ascension, where the creatures swarmed, assures us that "the first spoonful of that clear, creamy nectar called turtle-soup is enough to reconcile any gourmet to banishment here for life." To understand what this means we may mention that nothing grows on the island. Everything has to be brought from the mainland, including even water, of which a gallon a day is the household allowance for all purposes. Mrs. Gill sent some clothes to the wash, and her servant

came back to say that she hadn't sent the water. Everything, in fact, there is upside down. Water is carefully measured; potatoes are fourpence per pound; occasional cabbages from St. Helena are knocked down by auction at one shilling and sixpence a piece; milk is priceless; but you can have turtle-soup for nothing. For the benefit of persons about to travel, we may as well give the same lady's opinion on the meat of the turtle. The steaks are excellent stewed or baked, but will not stand the gridiron. Cooked over the fire the meat becomes as hard and juiceless as an Ascension beef-steak. With the fins, calipash, and calipee, excellent soup was made when water could be spared. Our readers will remember, therefore, whenever anyone catches a turtle he must not try to grill it.

Needless to say that we receive large quantities of oysters from the States, thousands upon thousands of barrels yearly. It is surprising, however, to find four hundred and seventy-eight barrels in one lot from Brazil, of all places in the world, when we remember that the nearest part of the country is a fortnight's steam, and is right on the equator. I should not be astonished to find that they arrived here in the condition in which our George the Second preferred them—rather stale, as the anecdote euphemistically puts it. This certainly is the only shipment from that source which has caught my eye; more than that I cannot assert. While on the subject of the West Indies, I must notice one shipment which, from its very magnitude, looks strange. One vessel arrives from Trinidad laden entirely with cocoanuts—no fewer than two hundred and sixty-five thousand of them. Here is indigestion for the whole British population, surely! And this is only one shipment out of many, though it is the largest I have met with. For this is an article we receive almost every day in certain seasons from both West and East Indies, though the former are by far the larger producers. Next door, so to speak, to the West India Islands, are the Bahamas, now little heard of, but well-known during the American War as the starting-point for the final run of the blockade-runner. The chief productions of these islands appear to be shells and sponge. I find one steamer from Nassau bringing seven thousand three hundred and forty-four conch-shells, which go chiefly to Italy, to be cut into the well-known shell cameos, and two hundred and fifty-eight barrels of sponge.

This last is found there abundantly, and is well known to us all in the shape of those enormous coarse conveniences for the morning tub, and for washing carriages. This is a totally different thing from the fine small sponges with which we are all familiar, and which come to us from the Mediterranean.

As a specimen of West India produce, it will be sufficient to mention that one vessel of fourteen hundred and sixty-five tons came into London loaded with nothing else but rum and sugar.

From Tampico a steamer brought three hundred and fifty-four bales of istle, a name which must be strange to nearly everybody. It is, perhaps, better known as Mexican fibre, and is largely imported into this country for making small brushes. Talking of these, of course, leads me to piassava, of which one shipment from Bahia consisted of five thousand three hundred and seventy-eight bales. It may not be generally known that this is the fibre of the leaf-stalk of a tree which is found plentifully in Brazil, and whose fruit is the coquilla-nut, well known to turners, and converted by them into the rich brown umbrella-handles which everybody has seen. The fibre is the material which is used here for making into the strong sweeping-brushes one sees used in the streets, and everywhere, in fact. Its introduction must have been an incalculable benefit. Before that date, broom-bristles or whalebone were the only materials that could be used, and of the latter and better article the supply is practically limited, and consequently high in price. Amongst the great number of our imports from Jamaica, all may be said to be well known except one. This is pimento, which is almost peculiar to that island. It is the dried unripe berry of the *Eugenia pimento*, and though little known outside the trade by this name, it is very well known to us by its household name of allspice.

Everybody—that is to say, every male—is or has been a boy, and the next entry will therefore be of interest. It is no other than ten cases of slate-pencils. I am unable to say whether this useful article is produced in England, but it certainly does look odd that a country which exports enormous quantities of slate should at the same time receive slate-pencils from abroad. Another entry will be still more interesting to ingenious youth, and that is nineteen cases of marbles from Rotterdam. No doubt these will be what in my boyish

days were called stoneya. Very likely that is their name yet. Possibly, however, they may be alleys. These were highly thought of in my time, but I dare say they are not so much esteemed now.

Now comes another article also highly esteemed by the British schoolboy, but for a different reason. This is three hundred and sixty-three bags of hazel-nuts from Constantinople. It may not be generally known that we receive enormous quantities of these from several parts of the Turkish Empire. They constitute, in fact, the staple produce of some districts around Trebizond, and one may form an idea of their importance when we find, according to the consular report, that the value of the export to Great Britain amounted to twenty thousand pounds in 1877. Although we produce considerable quantities at home, it is evident that we cannot supply ourselves with all that we can consume.

Perhaps the best known of the foreign nuts is the Brazil nut. The word is not a misnomer, for we do actually get them from Brazil. There are many varieties, whose points of difference are only to be noticed by careful inspection, but they are all the seeds of certain forest-trees, and are largely shipped at Para at the mouth of the Amazon. I find one vessel bringing two hundred and seventy-eight barrels. They are usually entered as Sapucaia nuts, a name which will no doubt be unknown to most people. The real Sapucaia is the seed of the *Lecythis ollaria*, the largest known tree in the Brazilian forests. Its flavour is said to be superior to that of the ordinary Brazil nut, but its peculiarity consists in the way it is produced. Like all the rest of its tribe, the seeds are contained, a dozen or more, in a hard covering, which, when ripe, falls to the ground, is thus burst open, and the seeds scattered to take their chance. The covering of the Sapucaia closely resembles an iron pot with a lid on; the monkeys, who are very fond of the seeds, often manage to insert their paws in the pot by lifting up the lid, and not unfrequently find themselves unable to get away on account of the lid closing tightly on the paw. The tree thus gets the name of the monkey-pot, by which it is well-known in Brazil. Another Brazilian fruit, which for some years has been coming in in increasing quantity, is the orange. Most people must have noticed the very large, somewhat oval yellow fruit. These appear in October, before the Spanish are ripe enough for

market, and thus help us to a supply of oranges all the year round. Oranges are, in themselves, sufficient to furnish material for a separate paper, and, as there is nothing strange about them, they claim only a passing notice here. Grapes, however, deserve a few remarks. It will be remembered that the enormous supply which weekly arrives in England is of comparatively recent introduction. In the absence of statistics, I can only put down my own impression, which would date it perhaps fifteen years ago. Every one knows them as Almeria grapes, and that is the great port of shipment. I find one steamer bringing six thousand seven hundred barrels, and that is only one entry out of many. It is very possible that the position of this port may be unknown; I shall therefore feel that I am giving some geographical information when I tell my readers they will find it on the coast of Andalusia, in the south of Spain.

It is impossible to estimate too highly the importance of this large supply of the most famous of all fruits. Every physician will insist on the dietetic value of the fruit of the vine; most of us, I fancy, have heard of the grape-cure as practised in the north of Italy, whose peculiarity lies in the patient living solely on bread and grapes. Henceforward the Englishman who is so disposed can treat himself at home, the material is at his own door, and cheap enough.

Perhaps of even later introduction than grapes are pineapples. These come largely from the West Indies, and are sold here very cheaply. A larger and finer kind, however, comes to us from the Cape Verde and the Azores Islands. It is also from the former that we receive the chief portion of the bananas, which are now not uncommon in the fruiterers' shops. Personally, I must say that I am quite willing to do without these; to me, their sweetness is much too cloying. Like most tropical fruits, they are wanting in that slight acidity which is so grateful and refreshing to the palate.

But I am forgetting the title of my paper. Grapes and pineapples can hardly be called curiosities. Their importance as agreeable articles of food must be my excuse.

What in the world can we want with two hundred and twenty-two tons of white sand from Antwerp? Now this really does want explanation. Isn't there sand enough in England? There is plenty, to be sure, but not of this sort. We get

large quantities from abroad of a certain kind of sand which comes in solely to be converted into glass, by the well-known process. It is well-known that we do not produce ice enough for our own consumption; still, it looks odd to find a vessel coming into London from Christiania with three hundred and forty-three tons on board.

I have already expressed an opinion that nothing could be brought into the country more insignificant than wooden skewers. I find, however, that I was wrong. There is something still less valuable of the same material, and from the same source. It would be impossible to guess what this is, and, therefore, please note that I find on one steamer from New York seventy-six barrels of shoe-pegs. Skewers I thought were the climax; this, however, caps the climax.

A writer for the public possesses, in a high degree, the quality of omniscience, yet I must confess that I was staggered at finding in a steamer from Brazil seventy-five packages of Jaborandy. So complete was my ignorance, that I had to write to the importers to ask for information. All the information, however, that they could give me was that it was medicinal leaves. Let me observe also that before I had their reply, I had found out for myself. Jaborandi, it appears, is a comprehensive name in South America, applied to various plants of very different affinities. The leaves of the particular one in question have been long used by the natives as a means of producing perspiration. They were first sent over to Europe from Pernambuco in 1874, and have been experimented upon by various physicians, who all agree that they are a powerful diaphoretic. Its practical value as a remedial agent is, therefore, now undergoing examination. The plant is figured in Bentley and Trimen's Medical Plants, number forty-eight, as *Pilocarpus pennatifolius*, and appears to be a shrub four or five feet high.

Another curious entry is one hundred and eighty-five bales of *Adansonia* fibre from the West Coast of Africa. This is the fibrous part of the baobab or calabash-tree, known to botanists as perhaps the largest tree in the world, not indeed from its height, but from its breadth. It has been known to be sixty to seventy feet in circumference, with branches, each as large as an ordinary tree, spreading around for sixty feet. The fibre finds a market here for paper-making. The tree was so named by Linnaeus, after the famous French

botanist, Adanson. When one has had some experience of Bills of Entry, one gives up being surprised at any import. Yet I must acknowledge wondering why America should send us ten cases of salad dressing, which I find on one of the New York steamers. It is the only entry of the kind I have met with, and I am inclined to think Brother Jonathan's shipment would not turn out very remunerative.

Here is a steamer laden solely with one thousand two hundred and thirty-six tons of pyrites from Huelva. Most people will ask what is pyrites, and where is Huelva? Pyrites, then, is a rock, or stone, or mineral—call it which you like—which is found in enormous deposits in the south of Spain. It is a compound of sulphur and iron, with a small percentage of copper, and traces of silver and gold. These mines are now worked by two well-known companies, the Tharsis and the Rio Tinto, whose names are usually to be seen in the money articles of all the papers. This article supplies an instance of the admirable manner in which science works so as to utilise everything. The raw ore, if we may so call it, is brought here and sold to the maker of sulphuric acid, who burns out the sulphur. The cinders, as they are then called, are sent to works in different parts of the country, where they undergo various processes which result in the separation of the iron, the copper, and the precious metals, all of which are thus rendered available for their several ends.

England is well known to produce large quantities of glass, and in the highest qualities we are unrivalled. In the common descriptions, however, we are in a great measure beaten by the foreigner. How else can we explain two vessels from Bremen arriving in London the same day, one with one hundred and twenty-seven thousand six hundred and fifty, and the other with one hundred and seventy-three thousand three hundred and thirty glass bottles, and such entries as these are very common.

I find on a New York steamer one hundred cases stove-polish. I wonder if this is a superior article to our well-known black lead. One would think we need not go to the States for that.

There still remains one entry, with which I may finish in a very satisfactory manner. Did anyone ever think of seeing such an entry as this: One hundred and forty-three barrels of tortoiseshell. I know when I saw it I rubbed my eyes, but there it

was plain enough, and others like it are regularly to be met with. And now to give some information about them.

Anybody who lives in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, or, I should imagine, any of our chief cities, must often have seen large baskets full of tortoises exposed for sale in the streets. Those readers who have not had the opportunity of seeing them will please accept this as the statement of a well-known fact. We know perfectly well that these creatures are not natives of England, and they must, therefore, have come from abroad. That they do come, and in good quantities, is evident from the above entry. If I had been asked where they came from I should have said vaguely, "Oh, the South of Europe, I suppose," for I know they are common enough in the south of Spain. But it is not from Spain that we are supplied. If you will look at a map of Africa, you will find on the north-west a large portion of the empire of Morocco, of which the best-known ports are Mogador and Tangiers. Between these two are a few small ports, or rather places of call, which are served by a regular line of British steamers. From one of these small places—Casa Blanca, this large consignment was shipped. When we come to think of it we see at once that this style of package is at the same time the best and the only one available. No tortoise is afraid of being crushed; an extra hundred-weight or two on his back is of no consequence; he is prevented walking over the ship's side, and if being closely packed tends to keep him warm, well, so much the better for him as he gets into colder regions.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XII. MR. GOODALL HAS HIS WAY.

"You won't mind my saying so, Theo dear, but it really does not do to be quite so odd," said Helen, with the superiority of a married woman.

They were in the drawing-room after dinner, and Mr. Goodall had not yet come in. Helen was looking down as she spoke, her long eyelashes were drooping, her fair head shone in the lamplight; her mouth was smiling, for she was very much amused at what her cousin had been saying. She was not vexed, for she thought Theo was a little ashamed of her prank that afternoon. Theo had explained how it all

happened, and had told her what she and Mr. Fane had talked about on the way home; this seemed quite a strange piece of condescension, and very satisfactory.

Theo's meekness encouraged Helen to moralise a little, in hopes of checking these adventures for the future.

"Am I odd? How do you mean?" said Theo.

"Well, my dear, talking over a man's family affairs with him, the second time you have seen him. I dare say he took it very nicely, but don't you think he must have been rather surprised?"

"I was afraid he would be. I begged his pardon," said Theo. "Yes, I am sorry for some reasons. It seemed to remind him of so many tiresome things, poor boy! I don't think he really minded, though."

"Perhaps he felt that your interest was a compliment," said Helen, smiling still. "Some people like being pitied and fussed over; but I think," she added with sudden seriousness, "it is a dangerous game, Theo, for a girl like you."

She stopped and looked up at her cousin, but Theo hardly seemed to have heard her; she was leaning forward on a table, with Caldecott's last picture-book before her, her hand shading her eyes. Helen thought she might as well go on a little farther; her husband's influence had made her anxious, by some means or other, to throw cold water on Theo's acquaintance with the Fanes.

"You amuse me," she said, "when you talk of Mr. Fane as 'poor boy.' When I saw him at the wedding he looked like anything but that. I am pretty sure he is older than you think, and very much less simple and soft-hearted than you think. He has gone through a good deal before he came into these parts. But perhaps the next time you see him he will confide the story of his life. When do you expect to meet him, again, Theo?"

Theo did not answer for a moment, and Helen was almost afraid that she had gone too far; she was venturing on the verge of those jokes which experience had taught her that Theo would not bear, even from her.

But Theo was not thinking at all of herself that evening, and it did not occur to her to be angry.

"He looked younger to-day than at the wedding," she said quietly. "I dare say you are right, though; he may have gone through a good deal, but of course that does not matter to us. What does matter is his sister, obliged to be in the house with those men. I don't like his brother at all—still, he is the brother, and he is

not unkind to her—but that other man is quite out of the question.”

“My child,” said Helen sorrowfully, “are you going to make it your mission to rescue all the girls who have horrid men in the house with them? You had better build a sort of orphanage, and set up an order of women to look after them, and be yourself the first lady-abbess.”

“There might be many worse ways of spending one’s life,” said Theo.

Helen laughed a little.

“No doubt,” she said. “But I think you might find a worse case than Miss Fane’s to begin with. She has two brothers to take care of her; both of them are supposed to be kind to her, one perfectly devoted. I’m sorry, but I can’t screw out much sympathy for her. If I could, I should be more sorry that both you and I will have to let her alone.”

“Why?” said Theo, taking her hand away from her eyes, and looking at Helen with an earnestness which was a little difficult to meet.

“Why, my dear,” said Helen, and coming quickly across to the sofa where her cousin was sitting, she put her arm round her and kissed her in her old, soft, coaxing way; “why,” she said, “I know John better than you do, Theo, and when he wishes a thing seriously, I know he has some good reason for it. He is not hard or unkind, but he is very sensible. He does not wish me to know these people, and so, Theo, don’t you understand, you can hardly see much of them while you are staying with me. Of course he knows that to-day was an accident, and, anyhow, you perhaps didn’t clearly see how decided he is about it. I really am very sorry, if you have taken a fancy to them,” she said affectionately, looking up into her friend’s face.

Theo had coloured a little, and there was a line in her forehead, but she could not be really angry with Helen, however stupid and unreasonable she might think Mr. Goodall. Helen had found the right means of getting her own way. Theo bent and kissed her soft cheek.

“All right, Nell. I won’t walk that way again,” she said. “And now let us drop the subject, please.”

It seemed like an easy victory, and Helen was satisfied. She wished for nothing better than to drop the subject. Theo might go on thinking about these people; most likely she would, in her own foolish, romantic way; but as long as she did not talk about them, and did not attempt to

carry her Quixotic fancies into action, her thoughts did not matter much. Helen had every reason to be satisfied.

For a few days after this adventure, Theo was, perhaps, a little more dreamy than usual, a little indifferent about going out, and seeing more of the neighbourhood, but one day she seemed to wake to a consciousness of her shortcomings, and a change came over her which gratified Mr. Goodall. She asked him to take her over his works, and spent a whole afternoon there with him in the hot sheds and workrooms, among the wheels, and the clay-heaps, and the smoking furnaces. She talked to the potters at their work, to the red-grimed boys who were fetching and carrying, to the rough girls who sat painting. The work was all rather rough, for Mr. Goodall’s clay was not of a sort to make china, and the people naturally were rough too. Those girls stared at Theo, and looked at each other, and glanced aside at the master, whose few words to them had always been entirely businesslike. Some of them were inclined to laugh at the strange experience, but they looked at Theo again, and softened and grew grave in spite of themselves. Mrs. Goodall had walked through the rooms once since she came, but without much interest, and with very great dislike of the dirt, the noise, the heat, and the staring of the workpeople. Her light dress was more suited for a tennis-party; her lip curled with disgust at the whole thing, and she spoke to nobody but her husband.

Yet they liked seeing her; she was a pretty thing to look at, and their staring was all admiration. One or two pretty girls tried their best, on following Sundays and holidays, to copy her dress and air. She was quite their idea of what a lady ought to be; far more within their comprehension than this friend of hers, whose beauty was of a kind they did not understand, and who stopped and looked them in the face with rather sad eyes, and asked questions which confused them, and took their work in her slight hands, asking how it was done. When she and Mr. Goodall had passed on, there were great arguments in the workshops.

“But she don’t look like t’other one, and my word, if I was a lady, wouldn’t I wear a smarter frock nor that!” was the opinion of the prettiest girl in the works, who had been trying, with great success, her admirers thought, to copy Mrs. Goodall.

“Ah, that’s all you look at, you young

"uns. Now I say she's right down nice," said an older woman, to whom Theo had talked for several minutes.

"Don't you like having all those people?" said Theo to Mr. Goodall as he walked back with her up the hill.

"I must have them, till I can get all the work done by machinery," said John. "No, I don't like them. Those girls especially are a rough lot."

"I thought some of them had such good faces," she said. "Machinery! That would be very uninteresting. And, besides, how would they all live?"

"That is an unpractical argument, you know, against machinery."

"I should like to have great works," said Theo after a minute, "and no machines at all. I should employ hundreds of people."

"I hope you would sell your goods."

"I should not care about that," said Theo.

John smiled patiently, and stroked his face. It was hard on a sensible man to have such a babyish companion.

"But I should sell them," she proceeded, "because they would be much better than other people's."

"Then you are going to create some new workpeople," said John.

"Of course they would want training," said Theo. "These things can't be done in a day. Ah, you are laughing at me! But if I could try something of the kind, you would see."

"I hope not, for I don't care to see failures," said John. "No; in every age the right plan is to use the materials that the age gives you; make the best of them, take care of them, but don't expect more than they can do. I dare say we fall rather short in the way of philanthropy. I think myself it is as well to leave them a good deal of independence. The vicar likes to do all he can, and he has started a club, and classes, and so forth. Of course I support him. A friend of mine, who has some large works a dozen miles from here, has made model arrangements for his workmen. I wonder if you would care to see them?"

"Very much indeed," said Theo.

"We will drive over when I have a free day—or would it be too long a ride for you?"

"No, certainly not. Aster and I would enjoy it of all things—only, there's Helen."

"It would not interest her," said Mr. Goodall.

Theo had not at all expected to find herself riding about the country with him. The September days were pleasant and

cool, and that ride to the model village proved to be only the first of many.

John did not profess to care much for riding; he was growing rather heavy, and walking suited him better; but he had a good strong horse, and riding with Theo was much more amusing than riding alone. Her fights with Aster, in which she always came off conqueror, though he had a strong will of his own, her grace and perfect riding, her thorough girlish delight in a gallop over the turf, the brightness that came to her spirits as the soft wind blew in her face and brought colour to it, her preposterous arguments, the smile with which she took John's good, solid contradictions, the disappearance of her dreaminess in this rapid movement and fresh air—all these things filled the worthy fellow with satisfaction.

Every day he grew more fond of Theo. And Helen, who used to watch them away from the door and go back peacefully to her sofa and her novel, knew that they would come in presently much more cheerful than they went, and would have a great deal to tell her—Theo, at least—of adventures on the way and the wonderful behaviour of the horses.

On other days Helen and Theo took long drives together, for the neighbourhood, like most of its kind, was both prettier and more sociable than they thought at first. There were people scattered here and there, and a cathedral town within fifteen miles; there were garden-parties, to which Mr. Goodall was generally too busy to go, so that the two cousins appeared at them together. Here they met a variety of people, who were all friendly, though most of them lived a long way off; but neither Helen nor Theo cared much for any of them, and they generally came back yawning from these festivities.

"I should like to be quite uncivilised, and to ride for miles and miles over a great plain," said Theo one evening, when John had been reproaching them for their unsociableness.

"And I should like to be left in peace," said Helen.

At the same time John noticed, when he went with them to any of these parties, that his wife and her cousin appeared perfectly happy, and were more agreeable, and had more to talk about, than any of the other people there. Under these circumstances it seemed wrong-headed of them to complain afterwards of being bored to extinction. He said so to Helen, but she only

laughed, and told him he did not understand.

They did not meet the Fanes anywhere; perhaps it was not likely that they should; yet Theo's eyes always wandered a little curiously round the rooms and lawns, and a sad, scornful sort of look came into her face when she saw they were not there. She often thought of the child Ada, with the pleading blue eyes which had touched her. It seemed hardly possible that she was not to see her or her brother again. It was a little humiliating to imagine what he must think of the strange woman who had told him she was fond of his sister, and then had lived on for weeks and weeks within two miles, without making the smallest attempt to see her again. What could he think? Theo puzzled herself about this very often, till she put up her two hands to her cheeks, and found they were burning with vexation. Yet she was not conscious of any wish to go away from Woodcote, and Helen was only too glad to keep her. Hugh wrote that he would be coming back from Scotland before long, and could stop at Woodcote and take her back to London. Of course that was very nice, and she would be very glad to see dear old Hugh again. But in the meanwhile, evening after evening, she looked out of her own high window to the sunset, and to a distant line of trees dark against the glow, often more or less obscured by smoke rising from the valley.

One evening a little thing happened, not important in itself, as far as Theo knew, though it brought a strange trouble into her mind, and she was never afterwards able to forget it.

October had come; the days were shortening fast, and it was quite twilight when she and Mr. Goodall were returning from one of their long rides. They had come along the high-road nearly as far as Deerhurst, when John suggested that by crossing a field or two they would cut off a corner, and come into the Woodcote lane much quicker than by going on to where it joined the road. There was a broad path across the field, and a rough stile used by the miners, many of whom made a short cut this way to the colliery. It was not, however, the direct pathway to the colliery from Deerhurst.

At this time in the evening no one was to be seen there; the marshy meadows,

the waste banks beyond, stretched out bare and dismal under a dim, cloudy sky.

The gate was not easy to unfasten, and Mr. Goodall was fumbling with it when a tall figure appeared suddenly out of the shadow of the hedge, having come up the road from Deerhurst, and a voice said:

"Let me do that for you."

"Much obliged; it is some dodge that I can't make out," said John. "Is it you, Fane? How are you? Getting on all right, I hope."

"All right, thank you," was the answer.

Mr. Fane's voice did not sound very cheerful, but he was stooping down at the gate. In a moment he had opened it for them to pass through.

Theo was quite close to him; he took off his hat, but hardly looked up. She stooped a little from her saddle and asked him how his sister was.

"She is very well, thank you," answered Gerald.

"Will you remember me to her?" said Theo, and she stooped a little more and held out her hand to him; she must have done it, if twenty Goodalls had been looking on.

He looked up then, and took her hand, and held it perhaps for a second or two longer than he ought. His own was as hot as fire, and trembled; but Theo only afterwards remembered the fate of her hand. At the moment she could see and feel nothing but the look that was fastened upon her; and she knew too that his face was very white and thin in the twilight, that he looked like a man with some terrible trouble upon him.

She made a sort of half exclamation; it was hardly possible not to ask him what was the matter; yet he had just now told Mr. Goodall that all was right with him.

At any rate she had no time, for all had passed like lightning; they had left him behind, with a cheerful "good-night" from John to comfort him, and Aster was cantering across the field. Theo looked back once, but the tall hedges cast a shadow, and the darkness was deepening; she could not see him.

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A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXVI. "THE NEGOTIATION."

WHEN the doctor returned to Heatherley that evening he had no need to tell news which was written in his face so plainly.

"It is as we feared?" asked Mrs. John at sight of it.

The doctor nodded, and produced the certificate which put the marriage to Charlotte Ann Easterbee beyond question.

"Why, it's hardly more than a year before his marriage to poor Lucy!" exclaimed Mrs. John, as she looked at the date.

"I can't understand it at all," said the doctor.

"He married both for money—to get out of some pressing difficulty of the moment."

"He didn't marry her for money," answered the doctor, nodding towards the certificate Mrs. John held, "for she had none. There were a few hundreds to come to her on her father's death; but even this she didn't get. Whether he got anything with Archie's mother or not, I don't know; but I know he didn't marry her for it. He had too little prudence and too much heart to make a merely mercenary marriage."

"Heart! How could a man with a heart so betray two women within a year?"

"I give it up," said the doctor with a shrug. "How a man with a head on his shoulders could marry one of them is mystery enough, without going farther."

Then the doctor described the specimen of the Easterbee family with which he had the privilege of an interview, and the

"You had a narrow escape!" exclaimed Mrs. John, upon whom, in her present mood and with her regard for the doctor, the tragic made more impression than the comic element in the narrative.

The doctor then, having seen Archie, and pronounced him progressing most satisfactorily, had to hurry off to catch the night train for town. In parting he gave Mrs. John his London address that she might send him at once an account of her negotiation with Mrs. Tuck, from which, to say the truth, he did not expect much. He thought it well, however, that Mrs. John should expect something from it, and so have the shock of this blow gradually broken to her.

But even Mrs. John herself expected little from it; not because it struck her as impracticable from a business point of view, but because, in her depression, she was not sanguine about anything.

Promising or not, however, it seemed the only thing to be attempted, and therefore she set out, early the next morning, for The Keep.

On the way she turned over in her mind plan after plan for influencing so heartless a worldling as she considered Mrs. Tuck to be; but each in turn was rejected as unsatisfactory, and she reached The Keep before she had definitely fixed upon any.

Not, in truth, that this mattered much. Mrs. John was the worst person in the world for a diplomatic mission, and she could not have carried out, even if she could have conceived, a negotiation which needed finesse. In this, as in some other things, she was an absolute contrast to Mrs. Tuck. Nor, again, as far as Mrs. Tuck herself was concerned, did it matter much either; for though she might be worldly, she was cer-

all likely to be hard in the first joy of the news about to be so generously disclosed to her by Mrs. John.

It was the very last news Mrs. Tuck expected when the servant announced that Mrs. Pybus wished to see her on most important business.

"She's come really to look at the house," was her first feminine thought. "But what can she be pretending to come about? Condolence, I suppose. Pshaw! One's sore enough, without being blistered with such tears."

But, as not even a crocodile would venture to call its tears "most important business," Mrs. Tuck, on second thoughts, imagined it must be some offer of a portion for Ida, preliminary and preparatory to her cousin's offer of his hand to her. He wouldn't hesitate to fling a rich bait, if he hoped to recover it when he landed his fish.

With these thoughts in her mind, Mrs. Tuck entered the drawing-room as a battle-field, alert and wary, and clad in complete steel. But at sight of Mrs. John's face all such thoughts vanished.

"Mrs. Pybus, you've been ill!" she exclaimed, so startling was the change a fortnight, or little more, had made in that kind face.

In truth, poor Tom's death, this horrible Bompas scandal—most horrible to Mrs. John—followed at once by the crushing scandal of Archie's illegitimacy, and by his illness through which she had nursed him, without sleep and almost without food, had made Mrs. John look as many years as she was days older than when last they met.

Mrs. John was surprised, and, in the hattered state of her nerves, almost upset by the sympathy expressed in Mrs. Tuck's look and voice.

"I've had a great deal of trouble. It was trouble brought me here," she answered hurriedly and unsteadily.

"It's this abominable Bompas affair," thought Mrs. Tuck, and the thought held her silent.

Mrs. John was silent also for a little, mastering herself and trying to think of some approach to the subject more diplomatic than a downright plunge. Of course she could not.

"This property—my boy, Archie, has no right to it."

"No right!" exclaimed the bewildered Mrs. Tuck.

"There was something wrong about—

about his mother's marriage. Mrs. Tuck, you will help me to spare him the knowledge of this disgrace?" imploringly. "The property might pass to Ida as though it were willed to her, and you could keep this evidence by you to secure you," taking with trembling fingers from a pocket-book the certificate and the two letters.

Mrs. Tuck, for the first and last time in her life, lost all presence of mind. She sat speechless, staring at Mrs. John, trying to realise this strange good news.

"She took mechanically the documents, and looked at them blankly without attempting to read them.

"Do you mean," she said at last perplexedly, "that his father wasn't married to his mother?"

"He was married to her, but the marriage was void, as he had another wife living. You will see if you read those letters. They were written to his first wife, who gave them, on her death-bed, to my husband; but we did not know she had been his wife till the other day."

Then Mrs. John told how she had come upon the letters, and recognised the writing as that of Geoffrey Guard, and how she had put it beyond question that the woman to whom he had written them was his first wife, and was alive for a year or more after his marriage to Archie's mother.

Mrs. Tuck, when she did at last begin to take the thing in, took it in with her usual quickness.

Having read carefully the letters and the certificate, she asked:

"There is no doubt that this was the first?" holding out the certificate.

Mrs. John shook her head.

"No; she was the first."

"And she was certainly alive at the date of the marriage to his mother?"

"Yes; my husband attended her on her death-bed, long after Mr. Guard's marriage."

Mrs. Tuck looked for a few moments in silence at Mrs. John, with much perplexed admiration in her face. No doubt this thing that Mrs. John was doing was merely just, but Mrs. Tuck thought it generous, and was moreover moved to admiration by the evident and absolute unconsciousness of merit of any kind in Mrs. John's manner. Besides, this good news disposed her to think enthusiastically of its herald.

"This is most generous of you, Mrs. Pybus."

"Generous!" exclaimed Mrs. John in

sincere surprise, for Mrs. Tuck's admiration was energetically and effusively expressed. "What else could I have done? But you can be really generous, Mrs. Tuck, and you will; I feel sure you will. You will help me to keep his disgrace from my boy?"

"Hasn't he heard that he was Mr. Tuck's heir?"

"No; he has been very ill, dying almost, of fever caught in nursing his half-brother."

"His half-brother?"

Here Mrs. John had to explain Tom's relationship to Archie, and the curious coincidence by which they had come to be brought up together,

"Then," said Mrs. Tuck, going off into a natural digression on hearing of Archie's dangerous illness, "then that woman's story—that Miss Bompas—was all untrue?"

"Not all; but most of it was, I'm sure. She's a crafty and designing woman."

"But if he was ill, he couldn't have met her as she said, before the magistrates, he had."

"He met her, and was taken ill directly afterwards; but from what he told me about her before his illness, I don't believe there's a word of truth in the rest of her story. He is too ill yet to be asked about it."

So shrewd a woman as Mrs. Tuck was little likely to accept Mrs. John's fond belief in the innocence of the youth she worshipped, as of any weight at all in counter-balancing the overwhelming evidence against him. Of course, however, she politely affected to be convinced of his innocence, and inveighed with such warmth against the falsehood and subtlety of Anastasia, that Mrs. John was taken in so completely, as to imagine she had secured a powerful advocate for Archie with Ida. Probably, Mrs. Tuck would, in any case, with incurable insincerity, have sacrificed Anastasia on the altar of politeness, but she did it with all the more heartiness from her shuddering remembrance of Mrs. Bompas. Therefore, Mrs. John might well be imposed upon, and be persuaded that her letter of explanation to Ida would have the confirmation of Mrs. Tuck's conviction of its truth. Ida herself she was not to see. Mrs. Tuck, convinced of her love for Archie—now more ineligible than ever—thought it safer for her not to see Mrs. John, and she therefore informed her visitor that Ida was poorly, and even in bed. And, indeed, the girl was not over well, and kept her room, though not her bed.

Returning from this digression, into which Archie's illness had led her, Mrs. John, much encouraged by Mrs. Tuck's effusive sympathy, again asked her help to keep secret the fact of his illegitimacy.

"My dear Mrs. Pybus, it's the very least I can do, if it can be done; but all Kingsford, and, I'm afraid, all Ryecote, know now that Mr. Tuck died intestate. How can you prevent him, of all people, hearing of it when he recovers?"

It certainly did not seem a sensible hope of Mrs. John's.

"When he recovers, he will emigrate, I think. He spoke of emigrating before his illness. I think it might be kept from him, if—if——"

Here the poor woman suddenly and unexpectedly broke down altogether. Archie had already expressed to her his resolve to emigrate, if Ida were lost to him; and though she had hoped to dissuade him, the mere thought of such a separation from him had been terrible to her. But now, so far from dissuading him, she must advise him, urge him, desolate her own life to spare him this blow. The blow was not worth warding off at such a sacrifice? It was well worth it to Mrs. John, who would willingly purchase his exemption from another trouble at any cost of suffering to herself.

Mrs. Tuck's kind heart was much moved by poor Mrs. John's utter breakdown. Thinking it the truest politeness to leave her to herself for a few minutes, she said hurriedly in broken sentences as she rose:

"Dear Mrs. Pybus, I am quite distressed. You're worn out; that's it. Pray excuse me for a moment. A glass of wine."

No one could appreciate delicacy of feeling of this kind more keenly than Mrs. John, and in the midst of her trouble she felt remorseful for what she considered now her most uncharitable misjudgment of Mrs. Tuck. Naturally she rushed into the opposite extreme, and gave her credit for virtues to which she certainly had no claim. She felt now quite assured, for example, that Mrs. Tuck would express as strongly to Ida the conviction of Archie's blamelessness in the matter of Anastasia, as she had expressed it to herself.

Presently Mrs. Tuck returned, bearing the wine, which she insisted upon Mrs. John drinking.

"You want nursing yourself, Mrs. Pybus. You're worn out with watching, and anxiety, and trouble. I know what it is. for my poor dear husband could

never bear me to be out of his sight for a moment. There, now you'll feel better ; and as for this matter, pray do not distress yourself about it. You have quite trouble enough without anticipating this. And if Mr. Guard means to emigrate, you've no need to anticipate it, I'm sure. You may depend upon this, Mrs. Pybus, that if what you wish can be done, as I feel sure it can, it shall be done. I shall see my lawyer at once, and ask him to contradict the reports that have got abroad, and to settle the matter as quietly as possible."

"If it could be quietly settled, that is all I want, thank you, Mrs. Tuck," said Mrs. John, who certainly did not want to have true reports contradicted, though she could not well say so directly. She merely hoped to keep Archie's illegitimacy from being advertised, either through gossips, or through legal proceedings. Mrs. Tuck again promised to see at once about it, and was sanguine of success. Then Mrs. John ventured to ask to see Ida, and was informed of her illness. Fearing, however, lest Mrs. John would connect her illness with Archie in any way, she hastened to add :

"She's been very much upset since my poor dear husband's sudden death. He was devoted to her ; and, indeed, his death was hastened by his anxiety to sign a will which left her everything. He would sit up to sign it, and the effort cost him his life." This she spake, to convey to Mrs. John the idea that this reversion of the property to Ida was nothing more than substantial justice.

The statement, however, had the reverse effect to that intended. Mrs. John, knowing that Mr. Tuck was not devoted to Ida, nor Ida to him, suspected that the girl's illness had to do with Archie, and was, moreover, shaken a little in her newly-rooted faith in Mrs. Tuck's sincerity. Mrs. Tuck, inferring this by a subtle instinct, and from Mrs. John's silence, set about repairing the mistake she had made. She saw that she had said too much—so much as almost to contradict herself. For if Mr. Tuck's death was sudden, his serious illness was not, and surely his deep devotion to Ida should have disposed him to have made some provision for her before the last moment.

"I may frankly confess to you, Mrs. Pybus, that I did all I could to induce my poor dear husband to make a will in her favour before his last illness, but he had that nervous dread so many people have

of settling their affairs, as though to sign a will was to sign their death-warrant. When he grew very ill, I hadn't the heart to urge him, but it seemed to weigh on his mind ; and at the last, as I said, he started up with a sudden eagerness to sign it, only to fall back dead with the pen in his hand." Here Mrs. Tuck was overcome, and was thereby rehabilitated with Mrs. John.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

WARWICKSHIRE. PART I.

LYING in an isolated corner, topographically speaking, of Warwickshire, Birmingham may be considered as the capital of a grand industrial district, the home of the metal-workers, and concerned rather with the geological distribution of coal and iron, than with the seemingly arbitrary divisions of counties. Some tribe of metal-workers occupying the skirts of the central forests of England ; where they found easily-worked veins of iron, and abundance of timber to be converted into charcoal for smelting ; such a tribe probably existed in England long before the Roman invasion. Who but they constructed those famed war-chariots of the Britons that gave trouble to the mighty Cæsar ? Certainly not the Celtic Britons, the worst smiths in the world, as anybody who has had a break-down in a Welsh village can testify. We may trace the descendants of this race in the brown and swarthy craftsmen, who are still to be found wherever machinery has not entirely displaced hand labour in the towns and villages about Birmingham. It may plausibly be surmised, indeed, that the Brum, as the native of Birmingham is still popularly called, recalls in his name the original complexion of the tribe. Probably when Uriconium was destroyed, the first foundation of the future greatness of Birmingham was laid.

To the metal-workers, no doubt, we owe the disappearance of the great forest of Arden, of which only the name is left—a name significant and sweet from its connection with Shakespeare, and with that greater forest of Arden on the slopes of the Meuse—and which received its name, no doubt, from kindred folk on the other side of the Channel. And just as Arden in England was the funeral pyre from which rose the Phoenix Birmingham, so in the vanished forest of Ardennes we may trace the beginning of the same industry which created Liège in Belgium, beginning with the char-

coal-burner and his pile, and the rude clay furnace of the early ironworkers, and ending in the myriad industries of the great hardware cities.

But of the intermediate history of the metal workers of Birmingham and its neighbourhood there is little record. Always had the neighbourhood been noted for its smiths' work, and Leland, visiting Birmingham in the sixteenth century, writes: "There be many smithes in the town that use to make knives and all manner of cutting tools, and many loriners that make bittes, and a great many nailers; so that a great part of the town is maintained by smithes who have their iron and sea-coal out of Staffordshire." At Birmingham, too, were forged many of the weapons that were wielded in the Civil War and while Charles's Queen was pawning the crown jewels and buying arms with the proceeds among the smiths of Belgium, our ironworkers at Birmingham were busily forging blades—swords of the Lord and of Gideon, in the phraseology of the day—of which they furnished some fifteen thousand to the Parliamentary army.

Strong as was the Puritan feeling in Birmingham, it was further strengthened by the legislation that followed the Restoration. By the Five Mile Act, the Puritan ministers who had been ejected from the Church livings they held under the Commonwealth, were forbidden to settle, or hold services within five miles of a corporate town. And as Birmingham, although a growing and important place, had no charter of incorporation, and was beyond the five-mile radius of any corporate town, it formed a convenient place of refuge for many of the Puritan divines, while they were followed by their former hearers, who found religious refreshment combined with the advantages of a convenient commercial centre. But while these circumstances may have helped in the great development of the town, it was to the skill and industry of its craftsmen that the rising prosperity of the place was chiefly due; and then nature had marked out this central spot for the existence of a great city, and when nature once starts in a determined way upon a business of this kind, everybody is obliged to give a helping hand.

And yet it is surprising, on this Warwickshire side of Birmingham, how soon the influence of the great town gives place to the calm and dignified tranquillity of

simple rural surroundings. At Coleshill, nine miles away, we have a quiet little town with its ancient church, where effigies of knights in armour and distinguished lords and dames rest in unbroken repose under niche and canopy. And a little farther on, among brooks and meadows, lies Maxstoke Castle, a noble building, well preserved, and surrounded by its moat; a fine example of the fortified mansion of other days, still used as a dwelling, and an instance of continued occupation from the time of Edward the Third, when the castle was built by a De Clinton, hardly to be paralleled even in this land of long-settled habitations and antique dwellings. Still are existing the great gates which Humphrey, Duke of Buckingham, placed there in the reign of Henry the Sixth, covered with iron plates embossed with the ducal arms.

To the eastward, Astley and Hartshill Castles continue a chain of mediæval fortresses, which must have had some strategic significance in days gone by; probably on account of their nearness to the great highway of Watling Street, which here forms the boundary between the counties of Warwick and Leicestershire. And this is the one example on the map of England of what may be called a mathematical frontier between two counties, which may be defined with a straight-edged ruler like those boundaries in newly-settled American states which run along a parallel of latitude. But unlike these modern divisions, our county boundary dates from dim antiquity, and the trace of it was defined by Roman surveyors long before the counties, as such, had any existence. As a county boundary, it goes back to the peace between Alfred the Great and Guthrum the Dane, appointing the limits between English and Danes, the western edge of Watling Street being English land and the eastern the limit of Danelagh. Half-way between two important modern railway junctions, Nuneaton and Rugby, lies the great junction-point of ancient England, the spot where two of the great roads of the country met and crossed, Watling Street, that united Dover and Chester, and the ancient Fosseway running athwart the country from coast to coast, with Exeter near one extremity and Lincoln near the other. A wonderfully interesting crossing to any who could call up any vivid picture of the remote days when this was the great meeting-place of

the traffic of ancient Britain, with legions constantly on the march, who, meeting here, might exchange news of their distant homes, while traders and packmen rested, encamped by the roadside, or native chieftains passed by in barbaric pomp, or haughty patricians, looking in supercilious pride from their gilded litters. Now there is hardly a sign of life along the straight, solemn avenues, which are expressive even in their bareness and desolation. A cloud of dust in the distance is raised by a flock of sheep on the march, and now and then a farmer's cart may roll by, while the steam of a passing train curls softly over the distant landscape. But now and then the place wakens up to life, and the ghosts of ancient wayfarers may gather to witness a scene they too could understand and appreciate, as horsemen and hounds meet by the broken cross, and the air is full of the music of dogs, and of the hearty voices of men who would be found to have many things in common with Roman patrician and barbaric chieftain.

To return to the more modern junction at Nuneaton—a place which owes its prefix to an ancient nunnery, of which some remains may be traced. Very interesting is the curious mixed development of the modern town, with manufactures of various kinds, carried on upon no large scale—rather samples of the varied interests and occupations of larger towns; a sort of epitome of rural and urban life, in which one of the greatest of our modern novelists found an admirable school for the study of character and the complex relations of social life.

Near the village of Chilvers Coton, at South Farm, was born Mary Ann Evans, better known as George Eliot, the novelist, who found her best and strongest inspiration in these midland scenes. Some strain of Celtic blood was necessary, perhaps, to give fire and imagination to the rich, but "mute inglorious" physique of the midland English, and in our famous novelist we have, as her surname implies, Welsh origin, qualified—and how necessarily the barren record of direct Welsh influence on our English literature may show—but qualified by alliances with generous midland womanhood.

The father of George Eliot was steward and land-agent to the Newdegates, amongst others, of Arbury Hall, the great show-place of the neighbourhood; a position

fruitful for his daughter in all kinds of suggestive contrasts and studies of the various phases of English life. The home of George Eliot's childhood was the manor-house of Griff, belonging to the Newdegates—the official residence of the land-agent, it seems, that careful, genial man, whose reverence for business and general characteristics are so graphically portrayed in *Middlemarch*.

Arbury Hall itself is a mile or so distant from the old manor-house, a grand commanding pile, due in its present form to Sir Roger Newdegate—of Oxford-fame as the founder of the prize poem—on the site of an older mansion, which itself replaced an Augustinian priory; and George Eliot thus describes it, under the pseudonym of Cheveril Manor, in *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story*: "The castellated house of grey-tinted stone, . . . a great beech leaning athwart one of the flanking towers, and breaking with its dark flattened boughs the too formal symmetry of the front. The broad gravel-walk, winding on the right by a row of tall pines alongside the pool . . . the lawn with its smooth emerald greenness sloping down to the rougher and browner herbage of the park, from which it is invisible, fenced by a little stream, that winds away from the pool and disappears under a wooden bridge in the distant pleasure-ground."

After the fashion of large estates that during the past two centuries have had a tendency to accretion, independent of the will or desire, perhaps, of the holder for the time being, Arbury has swallowed up many adjacent lordships, among others that of Astley Castle, already mentioned, once belonging to the Greys de Ruthin, and for a time the home of the unhappy Lady Jane Grey.

The father of Lady Jane, then Duke of Suffolk, took refuge at Astley after the failure of the Greys' attempt upon the throne, and pursued by the sheriff and his men, full of zeal for Mary Tudor, took refuge in a hollow tree in the park, a refuge that was pointed out to him by a trusted keeper. But the offer of a reward proved too much for the fidelity of the servant; he betrayed his master's hiding-place to the officers of justice, and the Duke was dragged out of the hollow trunk in which he lay crouched, to lose his head presently on the scaffold.

But before the time of the Greys, Astley Castle belonged to a race that took its name from the lordship, a race of fighting

and adventurous knights, who did good service in the wars, Welsh, and French, and Scotch. Of one of the last of these, Sir John de Astley, some memorials are preserved at Arbury Hall—a famous swordsman and duellist of the reign of Henry the Sixth, who, both in Paris and in London Chepe, exhibited his prowess before courts and ladies fair, with all the tenacity and ferocity of one of Dumas's heroes. That the Astleys were not mere soldiers of fortune, however, the rich acres of their inheritance are at hand to show, and the once magnificent church which they built, whose tall spire, once known as the lanthorn of Arden, has disappeared with the forest over which it was such a conspicuous object.

Drawing a line from Astley to Henley-in-Arden, we shall pretty nearly fix the limits on this side of the ancient forest of Arden, which, joining the forest of Wyre on the one hand, and Charnwood on the other, joined with hardly an interval of cultivated country, the other great forests of Derby Peak and Sherwood. "They say he is already in the Forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him, and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England, and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world." And can we doubt that it was his own forest of Arden that Shakespeare had in his mind when he wrote *As You Like It*, and that he, too, had heard many tales of Robin Hood from old men whose grandfathers must have told them tales of the merry greenwood, and the palmy days of the forest outlaw.

And thus in the old county histories Warwick is divided into Wealden and Fielden, although of the former, the Woodland, there is left nothing but patches preserved here and there in ancient parks and chases. Passing southwards into the Fielden country we enter the Hundred of Knightlow, with its ancient mustering-place for the armed men of the Hundred on Knightlow itself, or Knightlow Hill, as it is now called in forgetfulness of the old Saxon meaning of the word, which conveys the meaning of a hill.

And here we come across a most strange surviving custom connected with the tenure of land, the meaning of which is lost, but which seems to carry us back to prehistoric times. There are thirty-five places in this Knightlow hundred subject to a curious payment to the lord—a penny,

that is, from each tenant, which is called wroth-money, or worth-money, or sometimes the swarff-penny, to be paid every Martinmas Day in the morning, before sunrise, at Knightlow Cross. The ceremony is this—to go thrice about the Cross, and say at each round, "the wroth money," and then lay it in the hole of the cross before good witness; the forfeiture for neglect being thirty shillings and a white bull. The amount of the whole levy is only nine shillings and one penny; but the payment and the ceremony thereof are still religiously kept up. In the darkness of early morning still dim figures assemble round the cross, make the three mystic circles round about, and deposit their offering in the hollow of the stone. The steward comes to verify the deposit, and as to the ceremony—a relic probably of some heathen rite, for the white bull has a decidedly sacrificial aspect—if it be not performed with the same sense of awe and respect as of yore, it would still be deemed extremely unlucky to forego it.

Hereabouts, close to the little river Sow, a tributary stream of which forms a large piece of ornamental water in the park, lies Combe Abbey, an old Jacobean mansion, in which Inigo Jones is said to have had a hand, and which encloses, like a casket, the cloisters of the Cistercian abbey that once occupied the site. Here in her early days lived the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James the First, who had been handed over to the charge of Lord Harrington, the owner of the Abbey, who had undertaken the young lady's education. A quite romantic attachment between pupil and preceptor seems to have been the result, and when at the age of sixteen Elizabeth was married to the Elector Palatine, and went to live at that beautiful Castle of Heidelberg, surely preferable to any royal palace in the world, Lord Harrington still followed her fortunes with unswerving fidelity. And when, widowed and in poverty, the unfortunate queen returned to England, the same devoted nobleman placed his fortune and all he had at her service. It is said that Elizabeth rewarded her old friend's devotion eventually by giving him her hand in a secret marriage. At all events at her death her historic collection of pictures came to Combe, where they form the gems of a very fine collection. The existing portraits of the queen, however, hardly bear out the reputation her beauty gave her among the young cavaliers of the day or

the extravagant eulogiums of the court poets.

You meaner beauties of the night,
That weakly satisfy our eyes;
More by your number than your light,
What are you when the moon doth rise?

As for Rugby, which lies a few miles nearer the Leicestershire border, its history is that of the celebrated school which has almost extinguished the little town in its greatness. Lawrence Sheriff, the founder of the school, was born in the little village of Brownsover close by, and presently going to London to seek his fortune, found it in a modest way in a little grocer's shop in Newgate Market. Sufficient fortune anyhow he found to buy a good house at Rugby, and eight acres of land called the Conduit Close, near where the Foundling Hospital now stands—a close that was leased in 1686 for fifty pounds a year, and whose present value, covered as it is by houses and shops, is best known to the governors of the school. And thus with the rise of Bloomsbury rose Rugby School. And proud would the worthy old grocer of Newgate Market feel, no doubt, could he but know that, instead of the insignificant beings whom he intended to benefit, his grand foundation is taken advantage of by some of the wealthiest and best connected of the youth of England.

Close by Rugby, on the way to Leamington, lies Belton Hall, with some interest attached to it as the residence of Addison, for the few years of his wedded life with the fiery Countess of Warwick. The only daughter of the pair here lived out her long life unmarried. She died at the age of seventy-nine, and might easily have survived into the present century. Her long life was spent in somewhat eccentric retirement, and she has left nothing in any way to embellish the memory of the great essayist.

Taking the Coventry road, we soon come in sight of the three tall spires so characteristic of the old city. Long ago, other spires and towers would have enhanced the prospect with the walls and battlements of the city. For besides other churches, Coventry boasted a cathedral, long since levelled with the ground, being, it will be remembered, an ancient bishopric long joined with Lichfield in that dignity. That the present bishops no longer sign themselves Coventry and Lichfield is due, it is believed, to the ill-behaviour of the citizens in the civil wars, when they resolutely defended their city walls against

the King. And thus at the Restoration the new bishop cut the city off from the episcopal sign-manual, while by royal order the walls and towers which had been manned against King Charles the First were thrown down and demolished. But still Coventry remained Puritan at heart, down to almost recent times.

And thus there have always been a considerable section of the men of Coventry who have refused to honour the fair Godiva and her legend, and by degrees the scepticism has increased till people begin to discredit the whole affair from beginning to end, in spite of the testimony of the Poet Laureate. Such sceptics would deny the very existence of Godiva, were that not proved by indisputable documentary evidence. That Leofric, the Saxon earl, and Godiva his wife, founded the Benedictine monastery of SS. Trinity and Mary, Coventry, is a well-acknowledged fact, nor were they forgotten when after the Norman conquest so many religious houses came to ignore their original Saxon founders. In a death-roll preserved among the French archives, a roll sent round to all the associated abbeys of Normandy and England—a curious anticipation of the practices of the religious world of the present day in the association for united prayer—upon this roll, which issued from the abbey of Savigny in 1122, the monks of Coventry have inscribed, "Orate pro nostris Leoviceo comite, Godvia comitissa," etc. It would have been more satisfactory had they added, turned into good Latin verse:

She took the tax away,
And built herself an everlasting name.

Still, to find the name of Godiva held in reverence and honour is an encouraging fact to those who would fain believe in old legends, which almost invariably contain a kernel of fact. And, indeed, the attempt recently made to show that the Godiva procession and the story which suggested it dates only from the reign of Charles the Second, cannot be pronounced successful. Was Peeping Tom, too, an invention of that date, with the stern moral inculcated by his somewhat severe punishment?

Low churl compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come.

But perhaps we are becoming too gross to catch the real spirit of this charming legend.

It was Godiva's granddaughter, by the way, who brought to her husband, Ranulph, Earl of Chester, that claim to the lordship of Coventry which resulted in the building

of a strong castle at Cheylesmore, a locality now chiefly known in connection with bicycles and tricycles.

More substantial historic memories connected with Coventry are attached to the famous tournament, or duel rather, between Henry Bolingbroke and Thomas Mowbray.

Be ready as your lives shall answer it
At Coventry upon Saint Lambert's Day.

The lists were erected on Gosford Green, and Henry lodged the night before the morning appointed for the duel at Baginton, where, close to a more modern house of the Bromleys, a Royalist family, one of whom was Speaker in Queen Anne's reign, stands a solitary knob of the ancient castle, whence issued Bolingbroke on the momentous morn, no doubt with due flourish of trumpets, armed at all points, and mounted on his white courser, banded with blue and green velvet, gorgeously embroidered with swans and antelopes of goldsmith's work.

On the other hand, Mowbray lodged with the De Segraves in their castle of Calodon, and issued thence with almost equal bravery, his horse-trappings banded with crimson velvet "embroidered with Lyons of silver and mulberry-trees." It must have been a sad disappointment to the multitude, when after all this preparation there was no fight, and the would-be combatants departed to distant exile.

Henry must subsequently have recalled this scene when as king of England he met his Parliament at Coventry—that particular Parliament known as Parliamentum indoctorum, because the writs forbade the election of lawyers, an experiment which seems scarcely to have had a fair trial.

And then the same green that was the scene of the tournament saw the tragic fate of Earl Rivers and his son, beheaded by command of the northern insurgents who had risen against Edward the Fourth.

But in all their vicissitudes the people of Coventry seem to have always been an industrious, thriving race. In Coventry was preserved the secret of that blue dye which is thought to have been brought from Belgic Gaul, of which were the favourite mantles of the native chiefs, a colour the memory of which is preserved in the blue blouses of the French peasantry. The blue of Coventry is the original "True Blue," and Drayton thus adorns his Arden shepherd :

His Aule and Lingell in a Thong
His Tar boxe in his broad belt hong,
His Breach of Couvrie blew.

The art, however, was lost before 1581, and it is not till the eighteenth century that we have any record of the Coventry manufactures, when we find that the people are busy in making camblets, shalloons, and calemancoes. With the decline of this trade the people took to the ribbon manufacture, for which the city is still famous, although the newly developed industry connected with bicycles and tricycles bids fair to put the former in the shade.

WE AND OUR FATHERS.

It must always be difficult to form anything like a true estimate of the character of the current time. We see too much behind the scenes, and are too much influenced by our tastes and prejudices to see clearly the true value of the time and society in which we live; we are too close to it to get it into proper focus and perspective. Naturally there are many places where our shoe pinches us, and at these, as naturally, we grumble, leaving it to the next generation to point out how easy the national shoe otherwise was.

To see and confess the bad side of ourselves is, no doubt, a salutary habit, if it is done fairly and loyally, and not in the spirit of the Pharisee—"I fast twice in the week, etc.; and if I have done any wrong to any man I restore it to him fourfold." We admit in our modern confessional, the newspaper and magazine, that we are soft and luxurious, that we have lost the hardy manliness of our fathers, that we are intemperate and effeminate, that we are given up to frivolity and mere heartless money-getting, or at least that certain classes, to which, of course, the writer does not belong, have one or other of these vices—the one that happens to be the topic of popular talk at the moment; but, true to our national habit, we cannot help growling, even at ourselves. We seldom stop to see what proportion these matters of which we accuse ourselves bear to the habit of the nation as a whole—how far they are vices, and how far mere change in habit.

The future historian of the Victorian age will have a theme that should inspire eloquence. In no former period in the history of the world has there been such a change as has taken place in the last fifty years. Our grandfathers, could they come to life again, would scarcely recognise the

world they left a few years ago, so greatly are all the conditions of life changed. In no previous time has the Baconian philosophy so justified itself. Fruit has grown and ripened in abundance in our generation, and scarcely a week passes without some new invention giving easement to the mechanical toil of existence.

Our historian's difficulty will be in the abundance of the materials at his command. Periodical literature by the acre, by the ton, will tell him the details of our daily life, of our customs, our habits, our tastes, as well as of battles and treaties, wars and sieges; and will give him ample means of judging and weighing us. We ourselves can only see ourselves through the haze of our own prejudices, and it is difficult to allow for the distortion of the haze.

The charge that we most constantly bring against ourselves, as being the condition of modern life most markedly in contrast to that of our fathers, is what may be described generally as "softness" of life, the general and growing tendency towards ease and luxury, and general self-indulgence. From time to time accident brings some detail of our modern life into contrast with the habits of our forefathers, and we stop a moment in our hurry-scurry to moralise upon it. We contrast our fathers' dinner of joint and pudding with the half-dozen courses we now consider necessary. We call to mind that, in the early days of people who are not yet old, a bedroom-fire was a luxury that, in the case of young people, could only be justified by sickness. We compare our father's hour of rising, and the huge breakfast he was supposed to have eaten, with our laggard habits and attenuated meal, and in each case we find our father's state was the better.

That the premises are true, there can be no doubt. Life is "softer" now than it was even in the last generation. We have more appliances for comfort in every detail of our lives, and as, with exceptions scarcely worth considering, everybody prefers to live comfortably rather than the reverse, we naturally take advantage of these comfort-giving appliances. It is, however, worth consideration, whether this more comfortable life covers the charge of "softness" of living, assuming that, as is probably intended, the expression conveys the idea of such viciousness of habit as is involved in effeminacy.

It is scarcely a fair test of habits to compare them arbitrarily with those of a

preceding generation. To say, "Our fathers rose at six, and we do not rise till eight, therefore we are more lazy than our fathers;" or, "Our fathers ate a heavy breakfast, and we can only eat a light one, therefore we are less robust than they," are generalisations that are merely misleading. It would be more to the point to determine whether we sleep more, and what use we make of our waking hours; or whether our fathers' bill of fare would be the best suited for enabling people living under modern conditions to get the most out of themselves.

The habits of every generation change. It is in the nature of things that they should do so. The ever-increasing complexity of civilised life makes it impossible that it should be otherwise; but because the conditions of life of the present inhabitants of this island are more comfortable and luxurious than those of the people who opposed the landing of William the Conqueror, for instance, it does not therefore follow that we are less manly than they. It simply means that they lived as well as they knew how, and we do the same, but that we have the better means of living well.

Luxury can only fairly be computed by comparing it with the general standard of the times. Compared with the life possible two centuries, or even half a century ago, that of our days must, no doubt, be considered "luxurious;" but, on the other hand, our forefathers, could they come to life again, would probably find the wear and tear of modern life more than a set-off against the increased facilities of locomotion, the more varied bill of fare, and other matters that we now consider to be indispensable to existence; that is to say, we do a different kind of work now, or do our work in an entirely different way, and our preparation for doing it must be proportionately different.

The opinion, however, as to the luxury of the age will depend very much upon the class in which the critic has lived, for among some classes of society the general style of living remains very much where it did fifty years ago, while in others extravagance seems to have reached that pitch which has always been the precursor of national downfall—vacant lives vainly trying to find a golden charm against ennui. It is a sore on the national body, no doubt—a blain, an impurity in the blood which, did it spread and become general, would greatly endanger the

national health—but we think there is no reason to believe that it is more than a local sore.

In the present generation there has been a levelling down of ranks and classes. Money has been made easily; colossal fortunes have been accumulated; and as in the aristocracy of birth the cadets of the noble house share the prestige of the family name, so Croesus has made his family name a power, and even electro-plate claims kindred.

This sudden accession of wealth has greatly affected manners. The ornamental spending of money requires an education of several generations; and wealth has, of late years, come by millions to people unaccustomed to the spending of money. Lavish display has naturally been the result, and wasteful, almost criminal indulgence has become the habit of whole classes—criminal, because a false fashion is set up by the example, and is forced on those upon whom it bears hardly.

If you dine with a young man at his club, or a young officer at his mess, for example, this false fashion demands that he should give you champagne to drink, and so entails upon him an expenditure of generally double his day's pay.

Extravagances, however, are common to all generations, and generally right themselves in the long run. There is nothing new under the sun. Chaucer declaimed against the extravagance of ladies' long skirts, and if we spend more money upon sparkling wines than we are justified in doing, we have at all events improved in other ways. A three-bottle man is more rare now than a black swan, and the continual "nipping" of fifteen years ago has given place to more wholesome habits. We are luxurious, perhaps, but our luxury has brought with it a refinement that is having a very beneficial effect on the national health.

That we are becoming more refined in our tastes no one who remembers London twenty years ago will doubt. The town itself has altered beyond all recognition. The Thames Embankment alone would stamp the age as one of taste and enterprise; picture-galleries have increased fourfold; music, the finest of its kind, is to be heard in London; the theatres have been improved in a way that our fathers never dreamt of, and it no longer needs a long purse to be able to read the new books of the day. Our interests are double those of our fathers, we live in a more exciting

and more intellectual atmosphere than they; the works of all the writers and thinkers of every kind and degree are condensed for us in the magazines and reviews, so that those of us who from lack of time or power cannot assimilate large masses of mental food have it prepared for them in a seductive and digestible form, and every day the telegraph enlarges our sympathies by bringing us within touch of the Antipodes. As we eat our breakfast in London we read what Hong-Kong or Calcutta said the day before.

This is the condition of things we have inherited. It is a state of things entirely different from the experiences of our fathers, and causes a corresponding divergence from our fathers' mode of life. We live at high pressure now compared with the life of a generation or two ago, and require a different food—mental and material. One very noticeable effect of this high pressure is what our fathers would have called "precocity." Young people ripen now very much earlier than they did. They ripen earlier, and, what is more, they retain their vigour later. A man of sixty nowadays is generally active and alert. He often plays lawn-tennis and cricket, and entirely refuses to be relegated to fogeydom. We begin life earlier, and in spite of this increased tax upon strength the stature of the race increases. A woman who was considered to be exceptionally tall in the last generation is now out-topped half-a-dozen times in the course of a morning's walk in town, and there are few pleasanter or more striking sights than to stand in Waterloo Station on a summer afternoon and watch the streams of sun-burned, straight-limbed, athletic young men coming through from their city offices to the river and cricket-fields. Follow them down to their homes in the beautiful environs of London; see them get into their outriggers to practise for a race, the training for which means severe labour and rigid abstinence for weeks; see them get on to their tricycles for a run of twenty or thirty miles after the labours of the day; go to the tennis-ground, and see young men and young women amusing themselves with a pastime that tries both mind and muscle, and the charge of "softness" of living seems to take a different aspect. These young people come home probably to a better dinner than their fathers would have had, and they sleep afterwards in better-furnished

and more comfortable rooms; but luxuries are more easily come by now than they were in former days, and mean little more than habit. We use electro-plated forks of a pretty pattern where our grandfathers had to use steel forks. When the amusements of the whole youth of a generation take the form of violent and often dangerous games; when it is considered good fun to sleep in a small tent on the river-bank, cooking your own food and cleaning your own pots and pans; when the open spaces round town are hardly enough to contain the football players—football, a game in which broken legs and collar-bones are frequent and altercations rare—when young men engaged in sedentary occupations during six days in the week will get upon their bicycles and ride fifty, sixty, or even a hundred miles on the seventh; when outriggers and sliding-seats are used; and nearly every peak in the Alps has been ascended; fear that luxury is as yet doing material harm seems to be out of place.

It is possible that too much importance is given to bodily education in our day. Certainly very great prominence is given to it. The number of games has increased fourfold and the players forty-fold since the last generation. It would be better, perhaps, if a larger proportion of this energy were expended on more intellectual pursuits; but, nevertheless, the general effect is good. Anything that tends against effeminacy is in the right direction when a large proportion of the employments of the age are sedentary. It leads to a more careful study and observance of the canons of health, and aids that science of sanitation, which is steadily lessening disease and increasing the stature and vigour of the race.

Another hopeful sign that effeminacy, born of softness of living, has not eaten very deeply into the vitals of the country, is that the love of adventure and enterprise, which is the strong point of the English character, is just as strong now as it ever was. Wherever gold is to be hardly won, or heads to be cheaply broken, there our countrymen will somehow manage to push themselves. Of those who read these lines, there are few who have not son or nephew, brother or cousin, who is an untameable wanderer—a weather-beaten, hard-looking man who comes back to England once or twice in his lifetime, and looks with strange eyes on the old, small life of his mother-country. He likes

to see the old faces again, and to visit the scenes of his boyhood. But before long the sameness of civilisation palls upon him, and he leaves its soft pleasures for the rough freedom of his adopted home in the Antipodes.

When Garibaldi appealed for recruits for his red-shirted army, young men flocked to his standard from sheer enthusiasm. When the diamond-fields were discovered at the Cape, men of all ranks rushed to them, knowing the hardship and disregarding the risk. When the last Arctic Expedition was projected, a sufficient number of officers volunteered to have manned the ships twice over; and when the belt of miasma that fringes the African coast has been pierced, and the beautiful interior of the country is brought within reach, it is not too hazardous a prophecy to say that the tide of emigration will set there just as strongly as it did in former generations to Australia and New Zealand, and another fair England will be planted where till now a white foot has scarcely trod.

It will be said, perhaps, that this view of our generation is too rose-coloured—that a time that produces "mashers" can scarcely be called manly, and that our streets and our Divorce Court take from us all claim to be considered either decent or virtuous. We have looked upon the rosy side of the picture, no doubt. That vice and misery are still to be found in abundance there can also be no doubt. All that is here claimed for our generation is that we are not worse than our fathers, but are, on the contrary, making steady progress forward. Effeminate men there have always been since there has been any record of society. The slang name for them has altered from time to time, but the creature has been the same, whether he was called "fop," "bean," "exquisite," "swell," or "masher." It was a "masher" of the day who annoyed Hotspur with his puling daintiness, and he was probably not very different from a modern loungeur in a London bar—not much better nor much worse.

For the rest, the records of the Divorce Court are not any gauge of the morality of the age. The Divorce Court exists now, and did not exist fifty years ago, it is true; but it exists because the experience of that time showed it to be necessary. Before it could be established, the accumulated prejudices of ages had to be overcome. Custom, tradition, religion,

were all against it; and to overcome these the evil must indeed have been great. Now we wash that part of our dirty linen in public, and the newspapers advertise the unsavoury details throughout the land. Every case is known to anyone who wishes to hear of it; but the number of cases is small, and a comparison of the literature of the present day with that which preceded it does not lead one to think that the morals or the sense of decency of the current time have become worse. We write more than our fathers did, and we write a vast amount of nonsense, but it cannot be denied that the literature of the day is singularly pure—pure as compared with that which preceded it in England, or with contemporary writing on the Continent. The Puritanical spirit of our forebears has, in our day, been chastened down into comely decency.

And it is not only in the matter of decency that public opinion has ripened in this generation. The fruit of many a long fight and weary contention has mellowed down and become fit for use. What seems to many people to be irreverence and irreligion appears, on nearer observation, to be the truest reverence for what is good and true—a careful examination, and a painful rejection of what, in mere dry formula, is offensive to modern understanding. Asceticism exists nowadays, but unreasoning self-immolation, such as that of St. Simeon Stylites, would be impossible. Each form of religion has done its work and added its quota to the general result. The purity and singleness of purpose of Puritanism, with its outward grey coldness and its inward fervour; the gorgeousness and enthusiasm of Roman Catholicism; the painful, weary searchings of freethought—all are blending into one harmonious whole, and the world waits for authoritative expression of it.

A CALCULATED REVENGE.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

It was ten o'clock on Tuesday morning. I had already been at the office a couple of hours, hard at work over ledgers and day-books. They had been my constant companions for many days past. I was beginning to tire of their company. But at last I had discovered that of which I was in search.

I whistled down my speaking-tube for Mr. Jenkin, the head-clerk of the firm.

"Is Mr. Macfarlane come yet?"

"No, sir," was the reply.

I felt annoyed. He ought to have arrived half an hour ago. Was it possible he had taken fright?

I gave orders that he should be sent to me directly he came.

I had been engaged on an important affair, but I believed I had carried it through successfully. So far as I knew, my examination of the books had been made without exciting suspicion, but it was difficult to be quite sure.

Half an hour passed before Macfarlane made his appearance. When he entered the room it was evident he thought he was about to be reprimanded for his tardy arrival, for he began to apologise.

I listened to his excuses, which I happened to know were pure inventions, and then turned to the matter in hand.

"Can you explain these figures?" I asked him quietly, opening the ledger at a certain page.

He gave a slight start, and then moved slowly forward to inspect the entry.

"What is it that requires explanation?" he asked.

"According to the returns which I have received from Frodsham and Walker," I replied, "the amount of alloy in their last consignment does not tally with that stated in your entry. Moreover, they do not seem to have been allowed the usual discount, though you have deducted it from the sums for which you have accounted."

The evidence was as clear as day. He could give no explanation.

"It must have been a mistake," he said. "We used not to allow the discount, and I suppose I must have overlooked the recent change in my instructions."

"It's a curious mistake," I observed. "It has occurred in the only case in which, in the ordinary course of business, we should have no check on your transactions. Pure accident rendered me suspicious, and I resolved to see if there were any ground for my suspicions."

He made no reply.

"Have you anything to say?" I demanded.

"Only that it was a mistake," he reiterated.

"I am afraid that excuse will scarcely be sufficient. A mistake which results in a loss to the firm of a hundred and seventy-five pounds is not one that can be passed over."

"What do you mean to do?" he asked.

"Naturally, I shall put the whole affair

before my partners. In the meantime, you will remain here till they decide what steps to take."

He moved a step towards the door, but I had my hand on the bell, and he stopped.

"I have told you it was a mistake," he repeated; "but I am ready to suffer the consequences of it. It will ruin me to replace the money, but I can give you half of it, and you can retain the balance by degrees from my salary."

"That is not the usual method in which embezzlement is treated," I replied coldly.

"Do you mean that you will prosecute me?"

"I have no doubt whatever that the firm will."

"It's no good putting it on the firm," he said angrily. "It is you who have discovered it all. No one will know a word of it if you do not speak."

"You confess it, then?" I asked.

"I confess to nothing, except a mistake. It is for you to undertake the responsibility of treating it as anything more. Are you going to ruin me? Don't you know that if I am arrested my life is wrecked?"

I hesitated. It is a serious thing to blast a man's prospects for ever, however he may deserve punishment. He saw my hesitation, and took advantage of it.

"Why do you want to injure me? What good will it do you? You know I am the best man in the whole place. Is it wise to lose me? I will work as hard as a dozen of them if you will let me off. You will always have a hold over me in future, and if you see me shirking, you will always be able to keep me up to my work. If only you will keep silent! No one else knows!"

His argument was the worst he could have used; it determined me finally. I saw that if I consented to hold my tongue I should be as much at his mercy as he at mine—we should be accomplices.

"It is too late," I said. "You should have thought of all this before. I have no choice."

"You will send me to prison, then?"

"I shall report what I have discovered."

"Very well, then," he said in a whisper, "if you do, I swear I'll have my revenge! Another couple of years, and I should make my fortune; now you are destroying everything. Take care!"

"I am not to be hindered from doing my duty by idle threats," I retorted as I rose.

"You will find they are not idle," he

returned. "I'll make you repent this day, if I have to wait half my life for it."

I disdained to hear more. I left the room, locking the door behind me. Macfarlane attempted no resistance; he knew escape was impossible. To reach the street he would have to traverse a roomful of men, even supposing I could not have prevented him from leaving the room.

An hour afterwards he was given into custody. When the trial came on there was no difficulty in proving his guilt; it also came out that he had squandered the money he had appropriated in dissipation, and that he was even a more worthless character than I had believed. I felt no compunction for the part I had played. I had only fulfilled my duty. Nor did I anticipate that his threats were anything more than the expressions of the hate which he naturally felt towards me.

He was condemned to two years' imprisonment with hard labour.

CHAPTER II.

THE two years passed swiftly by. I had nearly forgotten Macfarlane. The only result of the affair as regards me had been that my partners conceived an exaggerated notion of my ability and tact, and reposed greater confidence in me than before.

The firm of which I was a junior partner was an old-established one. Our business was that of manufacturing goldsmiths, and was a profitable one. However, trade was by no means so prosperous as it had been; in spite of unremitting efforts the income of the firm gradually sank. Our only consolation was the knowledge that our rivals suffered even more than we did.

Personally I spared no pains. I was not by nature a business man, preferring the professions to manufactures, but circumstances having led me to embark in business, I determined to make the best of it, at all events.

Naturally I was dissatisfied with the recent course of things, and cast my eyes round in every direction for a fresh field of activity. At the same time it behoved us to be careful; more than one firm had recently come to grief, driven into dangerous speculations by the necessity of doing something.

I was in the refreshment-room at Euston one day, taking a hasty lunch on my return from a journey to Birmingham, when I was conscious of someone looking at me.

I turned round and faced a man who

seemed familiar to me. A moment's reflection, and I recognised him—Macfarlane.

He hesitated a moment, and then lifted his hat to me. Almost unconsciously I gave him a sign of recognition. He at once came forward.

"How do you do, sir?" he asked. "I was afraid you would not care to recognise me."

"I am scarcely sure I do," was my reply. I wanted to let him see that I was not anxious to renew our acquaintance. At the same time the meeting had taken me so by surprise that I had not made up my mind to cut him dead.

"You've every excuse for not recognising me," he said. "My face is a little altered, isn't it?"

It certainly was. He wore a beard and moustache instead of being clean-shaved. His hair was differently arranged, his whole dress and appearance were quieter and more gentlemanly than formerly. He had immensely improved in every respect.

"It is some time since we met," he continued.

"Yes, I suppose it is," I replied, wishing he had avoided the topic, for I felt very uncomfortable.

"It is nearly four years," he said. "Four years make a good deal of difference to a man, especially when two of them have been spent in prison."

What could I say? It would have been insulting, even cruel, to say that I was sorry.

"You don't mind talking to a gaol-bird, I hope?" he said with a smile. "You need not be afraid of my being recognised; no one but you has recognised me, yet I don't think you would have done so if I hadn't fixed my eyes on you."

"I should have thought that it would have been you who would have been the first to object to our meeting," I said. "The sight of me can't be very pleasant to you, I'm afraid."

He almost laughed.

"You're mistaken, I'm glad to say," he replied. "My one hope lately has been to meet you. We can't talk quietly here," he added; "there is such a crew. Could you spare me half an hour? I think I can promise you you won't regret it."

I wanted to get back to my work, but Macfarlane interested me. I had been severe perhaps with him in old days. I might at all events grant him the small favour of an interview now.

We took a cab to his hotel—a quiet one

in a street off the Strand. He had a private room, and he ordered up some coffee. Evidently he was in different circumstances than when a junior clerk and traveller in our firm.

"Try one of these," he said.

He produced some cigars. I took one; it was in the green condition that Americans love.

"Not dry enough for you?" he asked.

"It will suit me admirably," I replied.

"Didn't you get these in America?"

"Yes; I only crossed a week ago. I've been there for the last two years or so—ever since—you know what."

"I am glad to see that you have not been so utterly ruined as you anticipated," I said, conscious that the remark was in bad taste. But I was in a false position, and everything I said must be either stupid or awkward.

"Do you remember," he asked, "the day when you had me up in your room?"

I remembered it as well as he probably.

"Do you remember what I said when you wouldn't let me off?"

I nodded. Was he going to spring some mine on me? Was all this a preparation for a deadly revenge? Impossible; he was as harmless looking a companion as one could wish for.

"I said that I'd be revenged on you if I had to wait years. Well, I have waited years, and here is my revenge. I'm treating you to coffee and cigars, and talking away to you just as if I were the senior partner, and you a clerk. That's a better revenge than trying to put a bullet into you and then getting hung for it, isn't it? Upon my word though, sir, when I made that threat I meant doing you a mischief, if ever I got the chance."

"I am very glad you have thought better of it," I remarked, truthfully enough.

"So am I," he said. "So far from wanting to serve you out for the part you took in that wretched business, I am thankful to the last degree for what you did. I was on the way to ruin when you stopped me; you cut me adrift from all my old temptations and companions, and when I left prison I was free, in more senses than one. I went to America and there I got on. You know I have a certain sort of talent—even you must acknowledge that?"

"I know you were the best man in the place," I said, "and we were sorry to lose your services."

"I think it was fortunate for you that

you did," he said with a laugh, "or in a few years I should have appropriated a good proportion of your profits. I saw where the chances lay. However, I've lately been turning my energies into a more legitimate channel, and find it pays better, as well as being more comfortable to my conscience. I've no longer a constant dread of a policeman, and can look every man in the face."

We continued talking some time longer; he was an amusing companion, and regaled me with the most entertaining stories of his life in America. At last my business compelled me to leave him, so I rose and excused my unwilling departure.

He held out his hand as I went, and I shook it. I did so with considerable satisfaction. I felt an immense relief in finding that the man whom I feared I had irreparably injured had become a changed character, and had actually profited through the very experience that might have been expected to ruin him.

"I'm glad you'll shake hands with me," he said warmly; "it shows that you, at all events, no longer despise me."

"Every one must respect a man who has done as you have," I said.

"I'm afraid not—at all events, I don't mean to risk it. If you should happen ever to talk of me to any one at your place, I wish you would not mention that you have seen me."

"I am sure no one would wish to rake up the past," I said.

"Perhaps not, but I don't want any one to be reminded of it. I don't object to your speaking about it, but no one else shall. I've even changed my name; here is my card."

I took it—Mr. Charles Farebrother.

"If I can be of any assistance to you, I hope you will say so," I remarked as I put on my hat. "I should be glad of an opportunity of making you forget, as far as possible, that we once were on bad terms."

"You are very good; I should scarcely have ventured to ask you to do me a favour. You are in a hurry now, I see; will you honour me by dining with me some night this week? I should very much like a talk with you; perhaps it might result in advantage to both of us."

I consented, partly through curiosity. A few minutes afterwards I was on my way to the office.

I was careful not to mention that I had seen Macfarlane; his wishes were entitled to respect.

At the appointed hour I met him at his hotel. He gave me an admirable little dinner, and supplemented it with some of his choice cigars. Not a word did he say which could have reference to our past connection; he was simply an agreeable host.

I was curious to learn how it was he had changed so marvellously in his circumstances, but he seemed in no hurry to enlighten me. However, as we sat chatting after dessert, he gradually led the talk up to the reason of his invitation.

To condense his story, it appeared that on leaving prison he managed to scrape together fifty pounds, which took him to America. He obtained employment in a small jeweller's store or shop, but soon managed to find a better situation. Instrumental in saving the place from a burglary, he was handsomely rewarded—a timely investment of his gift turned out successfully, and he found himself in possession of ten thousand dollars.

All this time he had been on the lookout, and he thought he saw an opening for making money. The knowledge which he had acquired as traveller for our firm showed him that the goldsmith's art was not in a high state of perfection in America, especially in the Western states. He conceived the idea of buying the raw material, and sending it across to England for manufacture—the smaller cost and greater finish of workmanship in this country amply repaying the comparatively small charges for freight and duty.

The business prospered; he took two partners who brought considerable capital into the firm, and he was now the head of a flourishing concern.

Of course all this was intensely interesting to me. There was evidently a field for further enterprise, of which I knew but little. I once had made enquiries about the American market, but had failed to secure an opening.

"I'm over about it now," said Macfarlane, "and one of my partners, Richardson, will be over next week. Now what we want to find is a firm over here who will do the manufacturing for us at fixed and moderate rates—a firm we can trust for good workmanship, and so save the cost of a London agent and place of business. Richardson recommended Jackson's, but they have served us rather badly, and we have come over to make fresh arrangements."

My mouth watered. If only our firm could only get hold of such a splendid

job, it would go far to revive our sinking prosperity. My business energy got the upper hand of me, and I dropped a hint that possibly we might come to some arrangement.

"I confess that is just what I should like," he said, "but I was afraid to propose it. You are not likely to want to do business with me, considering what has happened in the past."

I did not know what to say, so I kept silent.

"However, you would keep your eyes open this time, no doubt," he continued with a laugh. "Seriously, though, nothing would please me more than to have you as our manufacturers; I know your style of work, and am sure you would treat us generously. Only I must insist on one thing, should we come to any understanding. There are to be no running accounts between us, we pay on the nail for all work done, not in bills or cheques, but in cash. Unless you consent to that proviso, I decline to carry the matter a step farther."

I protested against his want of belief in my change of convictions regarding him. But he was firm, he would not feel comfortable unless he put all possibility of doubt on our part out of the question.

After all, the advantage was on my side.

The upshot of it was that it appeared there was an immediate demand for certain work—a demand so pressing that there was no time to manufacture to meet it—it must be supplied from stock. This, of course, was agreed to. Raw gold was to be supplied at varying intervals to be made up as directed, and when the metal was not forthcoming, orders were to be executed in the usual manner from metal in stock.

The only proviso of importance was that neither firm was to deal with another as regarded the American agency. To this I had no objection.

About eleven o'clock we sallied forth together; he offered to walk with me part of the way. Happening to pass an American bar, he said he would show me what American drinks were like. We had two or three, for which he paid.

We then had a cab to Paddington, from which station I had to start for home. He wanted some fresh air, so came with me to walk back by the park. He insisted on paying for everything that evening, so produced a five-pound note for the fare, having no change left.

Naturally the cabman had none. Macfarlane would not hear of my paying, but

consented to my changing his note for him.

I made an appointment with him for next day, and returned home immensely pleased with my evening's work. If things went well, it meant a clear profit of many hundreds a year to the firm.

When I was in bed, however, an unpleasant idea came into my head. Was it possible? But no! I dismissed the thought, which, however, would not be dismissed finally. Was the note I had changed for Macfarlane a good one?

I had heard of tricks of a similar kind often enough. Macfarlane had not made a bad thing out of me if he had palmed off a bogus note in exchange for my five sovereigns.

I got out of bed and examined it carefully. It appeared all right. I was ashamed of myself for doubting him.

Nevertheless, I went to the Bank of England next morning, and had it examined. It was pronounced genuine.

Judge how ashamed I felt! What, then, were my feelings when I caught sight of Macfarlane standing at the counter not two yards from me, filling a stout pocket-book with notes.

I tried to slip out unobserved, fearful lest he had seen the transaction I had been engaged in. But he happened to look up, and caught sight of me. My only consolation was the hope that he had not seen the business upon which I had been engaged. I responded to his greeting, and we walked away together.

He had received a telegram that morning from America to the effect that his partner had started for England. So it was too late to instruct him to bring the gold with him; for the present Macfarlane would be obliged to give his orders to us to be executed from our own stock. Fortunately, he observed, his capital was large enough to enable him to do so.

The one point on which he insisted, which I thought unnecessary, if not foolish, was that no mention of his former name should be made to my partners. It was a moot point with me for some time whether I had any right to embark in transactions with him without informing the members of my firm of all I knew, but the security was so good, and the transactions so profitable, that I yielded to his condition.

CHAPTER III.

IN the course of the next few weeks we executed a valuable series of orders for

him. He always paid me himself on the delivery of the goods. The payment was invariably in notes or gold. Only once did he offer me a cheque. I took it, and it was honoured without question.

His partner arrived in the course of ten days or so, and Macfarlane introduced me, apologising first for the want of refinement observable in him.

"He's a rough diamond, a self-made man. But he has money and honesty, and knows his business."

As I had scarcely any transactions with him personally, I could not object to his appearance and manners; but I should have put him down as a villain of considerably deep dye had not Macfarlane given him so good a character.

Business became even more brisk between Macfarlane and our firm. At the end of a fortnight the former showed me a large consignment of metal which he had just received. He promised to send it to us next morning. The same day we took for the second time a cheque from him. The reason of his offering it was that he had been obliged to pay on the spot for duties, etc., of the gold. I received it without a misgiving.

"I wish you'd come and spend a quiet evening with me and a few others," he said, as he handed me the cheque. "I have been making some arrangements which I think may open up a new field for both of us. Will you come?"

I assented. He gave me an address—a new one. He warned me that it was not a swell affair, that the men I should meet were of the type of Richardson.

Having plenty of time on my hands, I walked to the rendezvous at the time appointed, but was overtaken by Macfarlane a few yards from the door.

"I'm rather late," he said. "I've had a little business to see to. Come along."

He took my arm, and led the way "by a short cut," as he said, to a house in a street not far from Soho Square. A latch-key gave him admittance to a passage, at the end of which were stairs, up which we clambered.

"Brutal hole this is," he explained; "but it holds more money than you would believe. Here we are."

He pushed open a door, and ushered me into a large room, almost bare of furniture, and half-filled with tobacco-smoke. Macfarlane was greeted with words from most of the men, some of whom did not appear to me to be very well disposed towards him.

"You're late," said one with an oath.

"Yes, I know," was the answer. "Richardson, you know this gentleman, I believe; will you introduce him?"

"Why don't you do it yourself?" was his reply.

"I want to look out some samples from the next room," said Macfarlane. "I shall be back in half a minute."

He slid out of the room, leaving me rather uneasy. The company was an ill-looking one. Even making allowance for the fact that they were miners, perhaps, and self-made men, their appearance was unprepossessing.

"This is the gentleman that helps to distribute," said Richardson to the company generally.

"I wonder how much sticks to him," said one speaker.

"Not so much as to that fellow in the next room," muttered another, with a glance towards the door out of which Macfarlane had departed.

A vague fear fell on me. What did these strange remarks mean?

"I don't quite understand you," I said to Richardson. "Mr. Farebrother asked me to meet you to-night on a matter of business."

"Exactly, and the sooner we get to work the better. How much have you to account for?"

One thing was plain by this time—that I had been deceived. I was in a nest of hornets, and I doubted if I could escape without being stung.

"If you will wait till Mr. Farebrother comes back, he will, no doubt, explain why I have come here," I said as quietly as I could. "I am at a loss to understand to what you refer."

"No, no," said a tall, cadaverous man, eyeing me suspiciously. "We should like a settlement of this job without Farebrother's putting his foot into it. The less we see of him the better till we have done with you. How much did you get for that last packet of fimsies?"

The word was a revelation. I knew it was used to denote forged notes. Like a flash, the whole thing became clear. I had been skilfully trapped into being an accomplice of note-forgers. My friend Macfarlane, instead of being a reformed character, was the villain he always had been. He had kept his word. This had been his revenge.

Fortunately I did not lose my head. I could see that I was amongst a desperate set

of men. If countenances told anything, they were an unmitigated lot of scoundrels. Should I cross them I would repent it.

I resolved that the safest thing to do was to pretend that I was the accomplice they supposed me; then, when I was safely out of their hands, the police should soon be on their track.

I temporised; I said that Macfarlane—known to them as Farebrother—had the accounts of what I had received. I would step into the next room and ask him for them.

This was prevented by a man locking the door, and swearing I should not leave the room till their demands were satisfied.

I listened patiently to the confused uproar of voices. As far as I could gather, Macfarlane, who seemed the chief of the coiners, had taken considerable quantities of notes, stating that a friend of his was passing them very successfully. After some time had elapsed, and he had produced very small amounts for distribution, pressure was put on him, and he promised that his agent should come and himself clear up the balance due.

I was the agent, and now they demanded, in no measured terms, sums amounting to several hundred pounds.

I explained that Macfarlane had deceived them; that I had never received the sums. I was rudely searched, and several notes and Macfarlane's cheque were found on me. The threats became more violent. I began to fear for my safety, when there was a sudden hush.

Steps were heard on the stairs; the door was rudely shaken, and then burst in, and a file of police marched into the room.

Never had I seen policemen with such gratitude. I leaped towards them for protection. I was only just in time; there was a loud report, and I felt a bullet whizz past my ear. I almost suffered the reward of a traitor, for the gang evidently thought that I had betrayed them.

So agitated and overcome was I that it was some time before I realised that I, too, was a prisoner. However, it was so; but I had no anxiety on that score; explanation would be sufficient to restore me to liberty. I yielded without a protest; thankful enough to find myself under the careful guard of the stern policemen.

Little did I think then of what was about to happen to me. I had not reckoned on the calculating villainy of my old enemy. He had so entangled me in his transactions, so carefully put on me personally the re-

sponsibilities of his nefarious transactions, that when I heard my solicitor unfold the evidence against me as an accomplice, I was horror-struck. I was a known companion of Macfarlane. I had concealed his identity with an embezzler. I had passed numerous false notes, taking advantage of my secure business reputation. I had even acknowledged to the gang that I had been a partner in their swindling transactions.

Worst of all, Macfarlane was free. He had given information to the authorities of the meeting of the forgers, and then quietly absconded, whither, no one knew. I furnished every particular about him, but all attempts to track him failed.

Now that his scheme of revenge and profit had succeeded, it was easy for me to see how it had been accomplished, and to wonder at my own blindness in never suspecting that I was being made a victim. Having once put me off my guard by professing his gratitude for my prosecution of him, he gave me the note to change with the idea of my making it a test of his honesty. He was waiting for me at the bank next morning with his pocket-book open to display the magnitude of his transactions. He came to my firm because we could supply him with easily convertible goods which, when melted, could not be traced. The gold he showed me was bogus. The cheque he gave me on the morning of my arrest was dishonoured. Everything was managed to get as much as possible out of me first, and then involve me in ruin.

I had almost resigned myself to being found guilty. Judge then of my joy when my solicitor brought me the news one morning of the capture of Macfarlane.

It had been effected in the most unexpected way. So far as we knew, all the members of the gang had assembled on that memorable night. There was, however, one exception—a man named Barker was delayed. He arrived at the house an hour or two late, thought that things looked strange, and found the police in possession.

He naturally withdrew. He heard full details of the capture, and then went to find Macfarlane, who owed him personally a considerable sum. Macfarlane was not to be found. But Barker persevered; tracked him at last, and demanded his money. Macfarlane refused it; Barker went the same day to inform the authorities of Macfarlane's whereabouts, offering to turn Queen's evidence, an offer that was accepted.

The result of the evidence that he pro-

duced was that the jury inclined to the belief that I had been a victim, and I was adjudged not guilty. But though I left the court proclaimed to be an innocent man, none the less was I aware that Macfarlane had kept to the letter the vow he made to be revenged on me.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XIII. TEMPTATION.

AT Ada Fane's age, disappointments do not always seem to come naturally. Looking forward from school, the idea of life with her brother had been most amusing and delightful; this boy and girl house-keeping was a sort of fun that does not fall to the lot of everybody, and Ada thought herself much more lucky than her school-fellows with their dull, old, settled homes waiting for them. That first evening with Gerald in the pretty old house and garden had been very happy, in spite of Mr. Warren's presence there; he was horrid, of course, but Gerald thought so too, and he would soon go away.

The next day he seemed so much more horrid that Ada knew she could not be really happy till he did go away; she was, in fact, rather miserable till the afternoon, and those few minutes in the lane with Miss Meynell. She saw that Theo liked her, and listened kindly to the discontents she could not help pouring out, as they walked those few yards together.

Gerald, too, when he came back from Woodcote, told her that Miss Meynell had said kind things about her, and though he could not, or would not, repeat them, Ada felt a sort of happy triumph. Nothing seemed to matter so much, if she had a friend so near, and her heart was filled with enthusiastic affection for Theo. A doubt of Theo's sincerity would have been sacrilege, and the child felt perfectly sure that they would meet again in a few days. In the meanwhile she filled the drawing-room with flowers, watched every afternoon for visitors, and hid herself as well as she could from Mr. Warren, who had an odious habit of following her about, paying her compliments, and trying to make her talk to him, especially when her brothers were not in the room.

Day after day passed, and no one came. Ada cried once or twice from disappointment, and then scolded herself, and remembered that it would be much better

for Miss Meynell not to come till Clarence and Mr. Warren were gone away; but the time seemed very long and weary.

At last the day came for them to go, and she hid herself at the last moment, and so escaped saying good-bye to Mr. Warren, a piece of rudeness for which Gerald was inclined to scold her afterwards.

"Clarence was angry," he said. "He would have hunted you up, only there wasn't time. You should not behave like a baby, you know, Ada."

"I don't care," said Ada cheerfully. "I hope I shall never see that detestable man again. And if Clarence can't come here without him, I don't care how long he stays away."

"What a vixen you are!" said Gerald. "What harm has the fellow done you?"

"Didn't you say yourself you would like to kick him downstairs?"

"Did I? Well, have you no better reason for hating him than that?"

"He told me one day that I ~~was~~ pretty, or something still more nonsensical," said Ada, colouring, and walking away to the end of the room.

"Did that make you angry? Never mind. I don't think you are prettier than most girls."

"Oh, Gerald, how silly you are!" she said, laughing. "He is a nasty, impertinent man, and you need not tease me, for I know you think so too. Well, he is gone, and now we may be happy. And first of all I have thought of several improvements in this room. I think Miss Meynell will come—don't you?—now that they are gone."

"She may, but I don't advise you to be too hopeful," said Gerald.

"What a stupid old log you are!" said Ada, and then she skated along the polished floor, seized her brother, and shook him by the shoulders, as he sat tired and discontented in his chair.

"You are a lump of indifference," she said, pulling his hair. "I hate you, and I love Miss Meynell. You won't care if we never see her again, but I mean to go and walk up and down Woodcote till she comes out of Mrs. Goodall's gate."

"You will do nothing of the kind. Get away, and don't bother," said Gerald crossly.

Ada was offended, and walked off to the other side of the room, where she stood with her back to him, pulling at a fern. After a few minutes of silence, Gerald said, looking out of the window:

"I believe Miss Meynell meant to come and see you. She may be prevented, or she

may have changed her mind, but, I tell you, I don't think she is coming now. And as for you and me, our present level is quite low enough; we need not go lower still by pushing, and running after people who don't want us."

After this speech he waited a little, sitting still in his chair. But Ada did not look round or answer him, as he expected; and he did not attempt to make friends with her then, but presently got up and went out, leaving her alone.

The little cloud had passed off when he came in again. He was more cheerful, and his sister, naturally sweet-tempered, could not long be angry with any one she loved and admired so much. She comforted herself, poor child! by loving and admiring him, though sometimes the disappointment about Theo was almost too much for her, and she cried a little at night over that lost vision. At seventeen one believes and loves heartily, and wants and losses seem almost impossible to bear.

Finding that talk about Theo always made Gerald cross and dismal, she let the painful subject alone, and for many days the name that was in both their minds was not mentioned between them. So the autumn weeks passed slowly away. Ada amused herself as well as she could while her brother was out, and always welcomed him joyfully home, but her life was very monotonous. There were no neighbours to interest her in the little village, she was too young and untrained to care for the poor, and the pleasantest afternoons were those in which Gerald found time to drive her about the country, at a great pace, in his rough pony-cart. Once or twice in this tearing round they dashed through Woodcote, and Ada looked about her with great eagerness then; but probably Theo and Mr. Goodall were riding many miles away. They never met them. That evening at the gate was Gerald's first encounter with Theo on her rides, and something else had happened to him before then.

One evening Clarence Litton arrived unexpectedly. He went first to the colliery, to look after his business matters, and was busy for some time at the iron safe in the office, where he finally left some valuable papers, chiefly railway bonds and certificates, belonging to himself and Mr. Warren. When he had done, and he and Gerald were walking home together, he talked to the young manager rather confidentially. He told him that Warren was not well, and thought of going abroad for the winter.

Gerald was a little puzzled by his manner, but they reached their own gate, and Clarence said:

"We'll talk business after dinner."

He was very pleasant at dinner, and kind to Ada, telling stories to make her laugh. She began to wish that Clarence would come down very often, if only he would leave Mr. Warren behind.

Gerald was rather silent; he could not throw off his anxieties as Clarence did, though his brother's burden was no doubt the heavier. He suspected that something was wrong, and could not rest till Clarence was sitting with his pipe over the study fire, ready to answer questions and talk seriously. He stood on the rug close by, with eager eyes looking down at Clarence. The inscrutable old face, as he called it in his mind, was harder to read than ever. It was yellow and coarse-grained, weather-beaten, and lined all over with care; the eyes were languid, keen, and expressionless; if the mouth had a smile or touch of goodness, it was hidden by the long thick moustache. Yet Clarence's was not a bad face; the hard, worn features had some suggestion of past refinement; the man had been a gentleman in mind as well as by birth, and had had some kindness in him. Twenty years ago he might have been a generous, attractive fellow, and good men might have called him friend. Indeed, considering his associates, and the life he had led, he might easily have shown more outward degradation now.

"What is all this about going abroad?" said Gerald, as his brother did not seem inclined to speak. "Is anything wrong?"

"No; he says he wants a holiday," said Clarence. "I don't believe he will go till after Christmas, however. He thinks we couldn't get on without him. I think we could."

"Have you disagreed about anything?" said Gerald, when his brother had smoked in silence for a minute or two.

"Would you be surprised if we had?"

"Not in the least. The wonder is that it has not happened before. I say, Clarence, I am awfully glad to hear it," said Gerald, his face brightening. "Life might be worth living, if Warren were out of it."

"On the contrary," said Clarence, "if Warren were out of it, you and I would be breaking stones. Fortunately, I am not quite so romantic and prejudiced as you. If he and I were to dissolve partnership now, I should come off badly, for he is not the sort of fellow you can take any advantage of, you know. That's not the way

to make my fortune out of him, which I mean to do; you understand?"

"I don't see how you are to do that," said Gerald, once more depressed.

"No," said Clarence, "and I won't try to explain. But there's you to think of as well as myself; and as I have done pretty well for you so far, I suppose you will leave yourself in my hands to the end of the chapter."

"What do you mean? Have you got any new work for me? If it is anything independent of Warren, I am in your hands ten times over."

"Don't be an ass!" said Clarence lazily. "If I am not independent of him, how can you be? I have a serious word to say to you, my boy. If you could bring down your pride so far as to be civil to Warren, you would be in a much better position at this moment. In fact, even now, if you will behave reasonably, I have some hopes that he will take you into partnership."

"Why, I have not a penny in the world," said Gerald, looking amused, but not particularly pleased. "Warren is not likely to be so weak as that. Besides, he hates me as much as I hate him."

"He is not fond of you, that is true," said Clarence, "but he values me. I am of great use to him, and he would sacrifice a good many likes and dislikes rather than quarrel with me. Besides, a lucky hit the other day brought me in a few thousands, which he wants me to invest in these works. Now, if he will consent to have you, the money shall be invested in your name—that will be all right between you and me. If he won't, I think I can do better with it somewhere else. You see there is a chance for you, and a good one—the best, in fact, that you have ever had in your life. When Warren was your age he was nearly as poor as you."

"Thank you," said Gerald. "Let me think about it."

He sat down opposite his brother, staring into the fire. For about five minutes neither of them spoke, but every now and then Clarence stole a glance under his sleepy eyelids at Gerald's grave face. Who would have thought that this ungracious young fellow was having his fortune made! Clarence never expected much from human nature, but he was a little disappointed; if Gerald had seemed to care more for his new prospects, future arrangements would have been easier, he thought. But he waited quietly, while Gerald turned the thing over in his mind.

"I wish you and I had never been

mixed up with a fellow like Warren," said the young man at last. "I almost think I would rather break stones than have fifty thousand a year with Warren for a partner."

"As you please," said Clarence coolly. "Your fifty thousand a year is not likely to come in any other way, as far as I can see. And I think if you had it you would sing to a different tune. However, after all, what do you know against Warren?"

"Not so much as you do, probably," said Gerald.

Clarence almost laughed.

"Well, half of your dislike is prejudice," he said. "He's rough, I grant you, and his manners are not good, nor is his temper. But he has some points that are not so bad. He is a capital man of business, and not ill-natured, and generous in his way. He was a very useful friend to me some years ago, when, without his help I should have gone to the dogs altogether. We have done a good deal for each other, sooner or later, and neither of us could very well afford to quarrel with the other; still, you understand that I owe Warren more than he owes me. It is no use fighting against facts. I am to a great extent in Warren's power, and I won't say it is always a pleasant state of things. But I am making money, and this seems a chance for you to make money too, if you will put your prejudices and your high notions out of the way."

"I should never be in Warren's power!" said Gerald quickly.

"No; that is my privilege," said Clarence. "It is a good offer, and you had better take it," he went on after a minute.

"Of course I am very much obliged to you," said his brother.

"Don't be too grateful. I hope you will be a rich man one of these days—but I want you to do something for me in return."

"What sort of thing?"

"Well, to stand by me in one of my difficulties."

"Of course——"

"Don't be in a hurry," said Clarence.

He became suddenly very uneasy, and Gerald looked at him in surprise. An odd, anxious, half-ashamed look came into his face; he got up, laid down his pipe, and stooped over the fire, poking it vigorously; then he began to walk about the room. On the wall opposite the fire hung a portrait of Ada as a little child, which Mrs. Fane had given to her eldest son in his younger and better days. She was in bad health even then, and she had

always felt that she could leave her boy and girl quite happily in Clarence's care.

Clarence glanced up at the portrait, and walked away again. The smiling eyes, bright colour, and golden locks were like Ada still.

"You know," he said, "that picture of Ada—I used always to have it in my rooms in town."

"Yes," said Gerald. "Do you want it back again?"

"No. Pity I ever had it there at all!"

"Why? What do you mean? What are you talking about?"

"I told you," said Clarence, "that if it had not been for Warren, I should have gone to the dogs more than once. One day in London, years ago, when I was specially obliged to him about something—and I think he was much less of a brute then than he is now—I asked him how I was to repay him. He looked up at that picture and said, 'By the time that child is seventeen I shall be rich enough to marry. You shall let me marry her.' Well—perhaps neither of us was half in earnest—at any rate I couldn't afford to refuse, and I gave him a written promise that as far as I was concerned I would further the marriage."

He said all this in a low, hurried voice, walking up and down. Gerald stared at him incredulously. It was almost impossible to believe in such a bargain, and words to express his feeling about it would not come at once to the surface.

"He sticks to it, I am sorry to say," Clarence went on after a pause, "and since he saw her this time he has talked of nothing else. She will be seventeen this winter, won't she? I tell him that, of course, it must depend on her consent, but the state of the case is this: we shall be ruined if she refuses. If Warren sets his mind on anything, there is no turning him off. He has waited for her, and worked for her—he means it; and you and I must persuade her to like him better than she does now. Do you understand?"

He spoke impatiently now, and looked Gerald straight in the face. To him evidently the worst was over, now that his brother knew it. Gerald turned very pale as he answered him.

"No, I don't understand—at least, I won't."

"Then you had better use your brains, and make haste about it," said Clarence. "Her refusal means a split with Warren, and I don't mean that to happen. I can't

afford it. I have to keep my promise, and Ada shall marry Warren when she is seventeen."

His manner became every moment more defiant; all shame, all regret, seemed to leave him, as he watched disgust and horror strengthening in his brother's face. He had quite lost his usual coolness, and with it all chance, if such a thing ever existed, of having his own way with Gerald.

"You have lived so much with Warren," said the young man quietly, though his eyes flamed with anger, "that you are becoming rather too much like him. Do you mean to say that you can look at Ada—can think of our sister, and imagine such a thing for a single instant possible? You are mad! you are possessed—I don't know what to say to you."

"Don't blaze away at me, you young fool!" said Clarence between his teeth.

"Why, what an idiot you are! Don't you see how much depends upon it?"

"I see that you are far worse than I ever thought you," said Gerald. "Worse than Warren—for one can't expect him to see the impossibility. You want to sacrifice that child for the sake of money! You thought I would help you for the sake of a partnership! What have I ever done or said that you should think me such a scoundrel? Why, my mother would come back from her grave, if she could, to take Ada. She had better die. I would rather see her dead than—— But you will not dare even to hint such a thing to her."

The deep pain and resolution in the young fellow's voice, the anger and amazement in his face—above all, the allusion to his mother, impressed Clarence a little, vexed and provoked as he was. His moral skin was naturally much thicker than Gerald's, and had been well tanned by all sorts of experience.

The idea of Warren's marrying his sister had been familiar to him for years—always a disagreeable idea, no doubt. As he laid it before Gerald, it certainly seemed more than disagreeable. Still, many girls had married for money, and many girls had married worse men than Warren, Clarence knew. He was angry with Gerald for his opposition, which, after all, he had expected; but though he saw it was not to be trifled with, he thought that a little quiet management would set things right in time.

Both were silent for a minute or two, Clarence still pacing about the room, Gerald standing before the fire.

After a short struggle for self-conquest, the elder brother said very quietly :

"I have done everything in my power for you, and this is my reward—to be abused like a pickpocket."

"If it was anything that concerned myself——" said Gerald. "However, look here—we may as well understand each other. Of course I shall never consent to this. I will not have it, if you are ruined ten times over. I am Ada's proper guardian—nearer to her than you are, remember. I will not have the subject mentioned to her. I decline this partnership, and I shall resign my present post. If Ada and I have been dependent on you till now, we never will be again."

"And pray how are you going to support yourself and Ada?" asked Clarence.

"By breaking stones," said Gerald.

Clarence laughed. His young brother looked at him for a moment; that laugh brought them to the verge of something worse than an ordinary quarrel. It was no use talking any more; and Clarence, who would have found an open breach with Gerald only less disagreeable and inconvenient than with Warren, was glad that after an instant's hesitation Gerald went out of the room.

Mr. Litton went away early the next morning, without having alluded to the subject again. Gerald went to his work as usual, but came back in the middle of the day so very gloomy and silent, that Ada guessed there was something wrong.

After luncheon Gerald shut himself up in the study, and remained there for two or three hours. At last Ada, tired of being alone when he was in the house, gently opened the door and went in. Gerald had perhaps been reading the newspaper; at any rate, it was spread out on the table, and he was sitting there, his arms and his head laid down upon it. He started up when Ada came in, pushed away his chair, and stood up by the fire.

"What do you want, child?" he said kindly, but he was looking so ill and pale that Ada was frightened.

"Nothing, Gerald—only you," she said.

"Nothing—only me," he repeated. "I wish I was nothing."

There was a hopeless, despairing look in his eyes, and Ada thought his manner very strange. He put his arm round her as she came close to him, and kissed her curly head; his ways were not often so affectionate.

"Dear old boy!" said Ada, laughing; "what should I do if you were?"

"Wouldn't it be jolly," he said, his eyes wandering out of the window, where the wych-elsms were waving their arms, and shaking down dead leaves on the grass, "if you and I could go off to California, or the diamond-fields, or somewhere. We might change our names, and nobody in England would ever hear of us again."

"Till we came back with an immense fortune," said Ada. "Oh yes, Gerald! What fun! When shall we go?"

"We should never come back," said Gerald; "but, after all, you wouldn't mind that. You have no friends here, nor have I. If I had any money to start with, we might go to-morrow."

"Clarence would be surprised, wouldn't he?" said Ada.

A shade came over Gerald's face.

"I mean it seriously," he said. "I have been thinking it over for the last two hours. Now you can do the same, for I must go down to the works. In two hours I will come back, and tell you whether we can go."

"But the money—where is that coming from?" said Ada.

"Don't ask questions," said her brother. He pushed her aside a little roughly, and took up his hat.

She watched him from the long, low window as he walked away very fast up the drive. It was beginning to be dusk. Ada went back slowly upstairs, very much puzzled; it was impossible to sit down and think seriously of such wild plans as he had suggested. Two hours seemed a long time. It was not nearly at an end, however, when she heard him open the house door and go into the study. She flew downstairs to welcome him, and found him sitting in the dark, silent, moody, and quite forgetful of all his fine ideas.

"Well, are we going?" she said rather timidly.

"No, we are not," Gerald answered very shortly. "Light those candles, will you, and leave me alone. I can't be always chattering."

Poor Ada obeyed these orders silently.

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SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 1884.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL,

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEED," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXVII. MRS. TUCK MISMANAGES MATTERS.

MRS. TUCK, having taken a most affectionate leave of Mrs. John, kissing her even, hurried upstairs to Ida. Ida, of late, had lived almost in her room, miserable with the kind of wretchedness which courts the loneliness that intensifies it. Mrs. John's long letter of explanation explained nothing. It simply confirmed the report of the meeting of Archie with that woman, with the addition of Mrs. John's conviction of his innocence—a conviction which, even with Ida, could not outweigh the crushing evidence against him. And besides and above all this, and even, we must confess, dwarfing all this to nothing, came the news that Archie was sick almost to death. It not only thrust into the background of her mind all that made against him, but softened and obscured it, as the shadow of death always does obscure and soften the defects of those we love. It did more. It showed Ida all her own heart for the first time. Up till now pride stood between her and the sight of her heart. So long as Archie presented himself to her mind as false and fickle, and unworthy even of the unworthy love of that woman, she did not dare to look her heart fairly in the face through the fear of finding that he filled it. But when all she could see through tears was Archie ill, perhaps dying, her pride gave way, and she realised for the first time how her love for him was true, entire, and loyal with that blind Jacobite loyalty, which worships its Prince, let him do, or let him be, what he will.

She was thinking of his illness, of his

death, perhaps, without the chance of a last look or word, and prostrate under the thought, when Mrs. Tuck burst joyously into the room.

"My dear Ida, my dear child," kissing her again and again, "the property comes to you, after all."

"He's dead!" cried Ida, aghast, starting up from the couch where she had been lying.

"Who's dead? Oh, your cousin," for Ida's ghastly face answered the question, as soon as it was asked. "No; he's not dead. He's a good deal better, I believe—quite out of danger. I didn't know that you had heard of his illness," with a sudden and chilling change in her manner.

It really was too provoking to find Ida's heart full of this cousin, who, within the last hour, was shown to be utterly worthless, tried by either of the two sole standards of deserts—birth or wealth.

"I had heard of it from Mrs. Pybus," said Ida, disconcerted and deprecatory, a sudden flood of scarlet flushing her white face to the roots of her hair.

"She has just been here, and——"

"Mrs. Pybus!"

"Yes; she asked after you, and was sorry to hear you were not quite well."

"I should have liked so much to have seen her," with a ring of bitter disappointment in her tone.

"Her business was not of a kind she would care to speak to you about," said Mrs. Tuck, still severely. "She came to tell me that your cousin's father had committed bigamy. He married my poor dear husband's sister within little more than a year after his marriage to another woman, and while she was still alive. Therefore, your cousin has no more claim than Richard to the property, which comes to you. Mrs. Pybus wishes me to help her to

keep his disgrace, if possible, from your cousin, and I shall do what I can for her," with some loftiness.

"He does not know of it?" asked Ida in a tone of irritating sadness, after a pause, to try to take in the situation.

"No; he doesn't know yet even of my poor dear husband's death. Mrs. Pybus wished him to suppose that the property passed to you by will, and asks me to make a secret of the real reason of its coming to you, because he would feel his disgrace so keenly. It's a great disgrace, of course, but I don't think his feelings are so nice as she imagines. He has certainly not shown much self-respect so far," with growing annoyance at Ida's evident looking at the news altogether from Archie's side.

"Oh, I wish you would let it go to him! It would never be known then. It's not known, is it? Known to anyone but you and Mrs. Pybus?"

"Ida!" in a horrified voice. Ida of all girls to show her heart in this immoderate and mad way! But Ida, taken out of herself altogether, and seeing only Archie beaten to the earth with blow upon blow of disaster, aggravated her offence by her excuse. "He's had so much trouble."

"Trouble! He has caused so much trouble, you mean, and worse than trouble. I don't see at all why he should be spared his disgrace he's so ready to inflict; but I promised Mrs. Pybus that it should be kept quiet until he leaves the country; which she engages for him to do when he's well enough to travel."

Mrs. Tuck, in her exasperation, overshot her mark by scornfully representing Archie's expatriation as wrong from Mrs. John in a bargain. She was really and hotly angry with Ida—after Dick's most noble conduct too!

Ida, too, was angry now. To drive such a bargain at such a moment, with such a woman as Mrs. Pybus, whose kind heart—the kindest in the world—was pierced already with so many sorrows!

"I can't take the property on such conditions; I cannot. I must see Mrs. Pybus."

Mrs. Tuck's surprise and disgust were too great for words. She looked them merely, and Ida, seeing them in her face, added deprecatingly:

"You do not know how she loves him. It will kill her to lose him."

"Pooh! He had made his mind up to emigrate before his illness. It was the only way out of his scrapes, I dare say. And as for your giving up the property to him to

squander it in low debauchery; you can do it, of course, but never with my consent."

And Mrs. Tuck swept from the room, angry with Ida, but more angry still with herself. She had forgotten all her usual tact in her exasperation, had mismanaged the matter grossly, and had, besides, been ungenerous towards the generous Mrs. Pybus. She knew perfectly well that Ida, whose ideal of gratitude was singularly high, would not do this thing, or anything, without her consent; nevertheless, she persuaded herself into thinking otherwise; as we all, in anger, believe that we believe things about our friends, which, in the background of our minds, we know to be incredible.

In this temper she hurried off to find Dick, who would be sure to sympathise with her in all points, and to whom she could disburden herself to her intense relief. Dick was smoking in Mr. Tuck's luxurious sanctum, not without the luxurious sense of doing something that was forbidden. Mr. Tuck, in whose lifetime even Dick would not have dared to commit such an outrage, was not so long dead as to rob the liberty of the charm of trespass.

"Dick, the property comes to Ida after all," cried Mrs. Tuck breathlessly on entering. Dick was surprised certainly; but not so much surprised as his aunt expected him to be, and plainly not pleased at all. But then Dick would hardly have been flurried by an earthquake, and would be naturally and bitterly disappointed to find Ida an heiress after all. Where now was the chance of demonstrating his disinterestedness?

Therefore, Dick, taking deliberately the cigar from between his lips, and puffing slowly a cloud of smoke into the air, said only coolly and at last:

"How's that?"

"You don't seem to take much interest in it," said his aunt, aggrieved.

"My dear aunt, you'll admit I have some interest in it, if I don't seem to take it. It knocks all my plans on the head to begin with; for, indeed, it dispersed all his golden day-dreams of doing the state some service as agent, or adjutant, or in any other capacity, where hard, honest, earnest work was in demand and respect.

"Perhaps not," answered his aunt, with the suspicion of a sneer in her tone; for Dick's overdone indifference to wealth and greediness for work began to seem incredible to her. "Perhaps not; for Ida, seeming to have your views about money,

declares she'll make over the property to her cousin."

"What?" cried Dick, surprised into keen and startled interest. Then, recollecting himself, he added, with his accustomed coolness, in too sharp contrast to his eager exclamation to take in his shrewd aunt: "It's his already, isn't it? I thought that fever must have finished him when you said Ida had come in for the property." Dick's knowledge of Archie's illness, which he had kept to himself, somehow strengthened his aunt's suspicion that he might just possibly have come by such other information about his rival as would explain the stoic, the heroic indifference to wealth, and the devotion to the penniless Ida he had of late displayed.

If Mrs. Tuck had not been in a very bad temper she would most probably have overlooked Dick's studied indifference, and allowed his demonstration of disinterested devotion to Ida to pass unquestioned. As it was, however, she was sore and sensitive, and disposed to take the least charitable view of all things and persons—even of the admired Dick and of his admirable magnanimity.

"He's much better—out of danger. You've heard nothing else about him besides his illness?" looking straight and sharply at Dick. Raising his eyebrows in slight surprise, he answered hesitatingly, as though considering:

"N—o; unless you mean that breach of promise business?"

"Not about his mother?"

"About—his—mother?" knitting his brows and pausing perplexedly between each word. "Do you mean to say she wasn't Mr. Tuck's sister?" with now an eager interest. Mrs. Tuck was completely reassured and restored to her faith in the admirable Dick. Indeed, she was ashamed of her suspicion now, and eager to atone to him for it in some way.

"He's her son, but he's illegitimate. His father had another wife living when he married my poor dear husband's sister."

"Phew!" whistled Dick, who seemed determined to give no more offence to his aunt by apathy of manner. "But how do you know?"

"Mrs. Pybus, who has been a mother to him since his infancy, brought me these proofs of it this morning. I must say it was most generous of her, as no one seems to have had the least suspicion of such a thing."

"Not Mead?" asked the astonished Dick.

"Not the least; nor my poor dear husband."

"It's very odd," said Dick, as he proceeded to inspect the documents. "These letters were written to the first wife after his marriage to the second?" he asked presently.

"So it seems."

"But how do you know? There's no data."

"There is; on the envelope. But the letters are of no consequence. Mr. Pybus attended the first wife on her death-bed long after the man's marriage to the second." This seemed almost to satisfy even the doubting Dick.

"It looks all right. There'll be a toughish fight over it, though."

"There'll be no fight at all, if you mean at law. Mrs. Pybus will be only too glad to let the property pass quietly to Ida if his illegitimacy is not made public."

"Then, if there's to be no suit about it, what does Ida mean by thinking the property should be let go to him?" asked Dick with an unfeigned and lively interest.

"She thinks it the only sure way of keeping his disgrace secret."

"Oh, that's it," said he meditatively and with something like a sneer in his tone, and then added: "That wouldn't stop it, you know; nothing will—it's sure to get out."

"Not through us, Dick; remember, I promised Mrs. Pybus to do all I could to keep it secret. It's the least we can do after her generous conduct in the matter."

"My dear aunt, you don't really suppose she'd have told you this if it hadn't been certain to come out? Depend upon it, she'd have kept the secret herself, and the property too, if she thought it could be done."

"She didn't think it would come out. She didn't think about that one way or the other. It was enough to know the property wasn't his for her to resign it at any cost—at the cost even of this disgrace to him, which she feels so terribly. It was noble of her," said Mrs. Tuck enthusiastically, to make up for the derogatory way in which she had spoken to Ida of Mrs. John.

"Yes?" said Dick interrogatively and incredulously, with a slight shrug of his shoulders.

"At any rate," resumed his aunt in a tone of irritation, "I have promised her to do what I can to keep his illegitimacy secret, and I must ask you to give no hint of it to anyone."

"My good aunt, you fret yourself unnecessarily about nothing. You might

trust me to keep this interesting youth's very existence secret, it's of so little importance to me, or to anyone I am likely to meet," in a supercilious tone which expressed that Archie was quite invisible from the dizzy height of the circle in which Dick moved. "Can I do anything for you in Ryecote?" he added as he rose.

"Ryecote? You live in Ryecote, it seems to me."

"It's that confounded Bompas business," in a tone of irritation and disgust. As Dick was not the man to bother himself for anyone about any business, and least of all about "a confounded business," his tone awoke a slumbering suspicion which had before found its way into his aunt's mind.

"What kind of girl is that?"

"Anastasia?"

"Anastasia! What a name!"

"Her father, who was a great book-worm, christened her after some old Roman priest or emperor or something. He meant her to have been a professor."

A professor! This was reassuring, for Mrs. Tuck thought a woman was naturally selected for this exalted position in much the same way in which Isaiah represents an idol to have been selected by an idolater. You go to Lebanon, he says, and choose a cedar, and cut it down and cut it up, and make furniture of the best bits, and of the bits unfit for furniture you make firewood; but of that part which is too tough or too gnarled to be fit for either firewood or furniture—of this, to save waste, you make a god. And so, to Mrs. Tuck's thinking, female professors are made only from such women as are too gnarled or too bony for love and marriage. Therefore, she was reassured to hear that Anastasia was thought even by a partial parent to be fit only for a professorship. On the other hand, however, she seemed to have been suspiciously confidential with Dick.

"She seems very frank," she said dryly.

"Mrs. Bompas? Very. Didn't you find her so?" drawled Dick. His drawl seemed always to double his score, when he scored in a retort.

"I thought it was the young lady who was so confidential?"

"So she was—in the police-court. I don't think she left herself much to say out of it. Anyhow, she hasn't said it to me. She's keeping it probably for her next appearance in court as the heroine of the breach of promise case. By the way, you'd better warn Ida that, if she lets the property pass to that youth, she's simply

making a present of the bulk of it to these Bompas people. That attempt at suicide will fetch any jury."

"She'll do nothing of the sort," said his aunt sharply. "Even if she wished to do it, Mrs. Pybus wouldn't accept it. She'd let him know the truth rather."

"That wouldn't prevent his accepting it. He's a cur by all accounts."

Nevertheless, Dick, in his own mind, thought the disclosure would prevent his accepting it, if Ida made the offer, which she was quite capable of doing. At all events, a public disclosure would certainly make the idiotic transaction impossible.

Therefore a paragraph which appeared two days later in the Ryecote paper will not surprise our readers as much as it surprised Mrs. Tuck.

"We have the best authority for stating that the heir of the late Mr. Tuck, of The Keep, Kingsford, who, it will be remembered, died not long since suddenly and intestate, is not his nephew, Mr. Archibald Guard. For certain reasons, which delicacy forbids us to publish, the property passes to Miss Luard, who, in the eye of the law, is next-of-kin."

It was not until some time after breakfast that Mrs. Tuck came upon the paragraph, and rushed off at once in consternation to consult Dick.

"It has got into the papers!" she cried, breathless and aghast.

"What?" asked Dick with his usual sang-froid.

"His illegitimacy."

"Of course it has. I knew perfectly well how it would be when that truly generous person Mrs. Pybus came to confide the dead secret to you. Most probably it was in type at the time."

SOME LONDON CLEARINGS.

CLERKENWELL.

A CLEARING here with a vengeance. Where we may be, it is difficult to say, for all the old landmarks are swept away. Somewhere in the valley of the Fleet it is evident, for there looms St. Paul's dimly through the sunshine and haze. But the vast open space; the lines of hoarding; the boards inviting builders to build; the wafts of steam rising here and there; the tall dwellings, with their strange cage-like balconies, where workmen's wives are taking the air, or hanging out the week's wash; the big breweries diffusing a malty flavour; the lines of buildings, half shops

and half warehouses—all this is in such contrast to the rookeries of other days, that in spite of the announcement on the wall opposite, that here runs Clerkenwell Road and there the Farringdon Road, it is no easy matter to judge which way to turn for Clerkenwell. How many names, savoury and unsavoury, of old streets and courts, have vanished in this great clearing! Fagin himself would be all astray, and the Artful Dodger would run into the arms of the nearest policeman in bewilderment, for all the runs, and short-cuts, and sly corners—courts, alleys, houses, all are swept away. What is there left of Cowcross, of Hockley-in-the-Hole, of Rag Street, of Mutton Hill, of Turnmill Street? They have vanished into air, these streets of evil name; there is nothing to show for them but broad roads, and level ground, and lines of hoarding.

The first glimpse we get of old Clerkenwell is the broken-off end of a row of fine old houses, with a staunch, upstanding air as if resolved to hold their ground to the last. Their neighbours are gone, and the anatomy of their back premises is rudely revealed to the world; but they can well stand scrutiny, so solid and substantial is their construction. But it is rather disappointing to find that the early numbers are missing, have vanished, indeed, into the open clearing, for we had hoped to find Number One still existing, the old Jerusalem tavern, once famous for its full quart bottle of sound old wine, which bottles were formerly known as "Jerusalem." This house is chiefly to be regretted as connected with the memory of that fine old topographical and archæological writer and publisher, John Britton, who served his time as cellarman in the old Jerusalem cellars. If we could summon up the spirit of worthy Britton from the vasty chaos of the surrounding clearing, what a wonderful guide we should have in him, through the mazes of old Clerkenwell. It seems not so long ago since Britton's death was recorded, actually in 1857, in his eighty-sixth year; and, with a life pretty evenly divided between the two centuries, he forms a memorable link between the old world and the new.

A charming old street is this Red Lion Street—not to be confounded with one leading from Holborn—with solid, dignified houses, distinguished-looking with their fine doorways in the pleasant florid style of the early days of the first George. In a fine old house, long since pulled down.

on the opposite side to the Jerusalem tavern, lived the owner and builder of the street, one Simon Mitchell, and after him a well-known racing man, Wildman, the owner of Eclipse, the most wonderful race-horse ever known. Eclipse was bred by the Duke of Cumberland, the hero of Culloden, at whose sale the colt was bought by Wildman as a yearling for forty-five guineas. Wildman afterwards sold Eclipse to Colonel Kelly for seventeen hundred guineas—a high price in those days, and still a good bargain for the colonel, for Eclipse was never beaten, and proved something like a fortune to his owner.

When John Britton was fining and bottling wines in the cellars of the Jerusalem, his leisure moments were generally spent at the workshop of one Essex, a watch-face maker, where there was generally to be found a little gathering of stout periwigged men of a literary turn. Among these was the Rev. Dr. Trusler, who lived at Number Fourteen, Red Lion Street, whose father had been the proprietor of Marybon Gardens, while the doctor's sister was famous for making the seed and plum cakes that were sold at that once famous resort. Both as to his fortune and his degree, the doctor might be termed self-made; but he was undoubtedly in holy orders, and he owed his modest fortune to his enterprise in supplying a long-felt want among his brethren. Trusler was the originator of script sermons—that is, of sermons printed in special type, so as to imitate manuscript; of whom Cowper writes in mild severity:

He grinds divinity of other days
Down into modern use; transforms old print
To zigzag manuscript, and cheats the eyes
Of gallery critics by a thousand arts.

Trusler's skilful management of this business enabled him to found a successful publishing business known as the Literary Press in Wardour Street. Another of Britton's early friends associated with Essex's workshop was Dr. Towers, who lived in St. John's Square close by, a painstaking compiler, the editor of British Biography, and other solid works, who lived to be Unitarian, or perhaps Arian minister at Highgate.

But there are no doctors, self-made or otherwise, to be met with in Red Lion Street now; the houses are all tenanted, neat, and well-kept; but they are all houses of business, offices, workshops, and held by engravers, jewellers, lapidaries, and people of kindred pursuits. A narrow passage at

he bottom of the street leads into St. John's Lane, where we come suddenly upon the fine old gate of the Priory of St. John of Jerusalem.

Little as you might think it now, looking at the curious odd and end shops, the rippered-herring stores, and greengrocers' stalls, this lane was once a dignified and aristocratic neighbourhood. Here lived Chief Justice Keeling; one of the justices who sentenced John Bunyan to three months' imprisonment for unauthorised preaching. A chief justice noted, too, for having once spoken disrespectfully of Magna Charta, for which he was brought up at the bar of the House of Commons, and made to apologise penitently. In this lane, too, was the dignified mansion of Sir Thomas Foster, another judge well-known in his day, a house that became afterwards the Baptist's Head. And as along the lane was the nearest route from the Sessions House—then known as Hicks's Hall—to Newgate, it was at the Baptist's Head that the files of the newly-convicted, who were constantly passing on their way to prison, would be jovially treated by their warders to a friendly glass.

But the sight of St. John's Gate, standing in front of us, lonely and isolated among the thicket of small houses that has risen about it, suggests a different set of associations. Here is one of the few remaining bits of Tudor London, built in the last days before the Reformation; the form of it long familiar to our grandfathers on the cover of *The Gentleman's Magazine*. For here in the gateway of St. John of Jerusalem did Cave set up his press, and hence issued for so many years the solid, substantial record of current facts and antiquarian fancies known as *The Gentleman's Magazine*. And even now we may fancy we see from an upper window of the feudal-looking gateway the massive, melancholy face of Samuel Johnson, gaunt and hungry in his hiring days—perhaps working up the debates from memory and imagination for the forthcoming number of the *Gentleman's*.

The old gate itself looks fresh and renovated, as if it were expecting its old masters back again, and, indeed, they may be said to have arrived after long absence, for on one side of the gatehouse a kind of porter's lodge bears the name of the Knights of St. John.

The title of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem will carry the

mind back to the days of the first crusade; and we must feel for a moment the proud thrill of exultation that moved the heart of Christendom in the last year of the eleventh century, when the news flew from land to land that the Holy Sepulchre was won, and the army of the cross triumphant. With the capture of Jerusalem came the necessity of enrolling Christian knights and men-at-arms to guard it against the swarms of the sons of Mahmoud, and thus the fighting and yet monastic orders of the Hospitallers and Templars rose at once to importance. The safety of the Holy Sepulchre was, no doubt, directly in the mind of the wealthy citizens of London, who gave the new order of St. John the land adjoining the *Pré aux clercs* of the Londoners—the meadow which encloses the "*fons clericorum*," the ancient Clerkenwell. And here rose the buildings, half priory and half military-barrack, at once church, hospital, and recruiting-depot, all assembled in a vast triangular enclosure, with a church at one side, and all round the cells and stables of the knights and their steeds; with a great open space in the centre for military exercises; where the clatter of arms and the neighing of steeds would be mingled with the rise and fall of chant and antiphon.

At the present date it is difficult to make out the ancient precincts of the priory, for the Clerkenwell Road has been driven right through the old streets and courts which might have given a clue to the former plan; and St. John's Gate seems to lead from nowhere to chaos. But there is still a landmark left in the old church of St. John, which occupies a corner of St. John's Square. This square, shown in maps of the last century as a spacious grassy enclosure, surrounded by fine houses with large gardens, represents the ancient courtyard of the military priory, and in recent topographical works, the house once inhabited by Bishop Burnet, the historian of his own times—the revolutionary times of the Civil War—is described as still existing. But, alas! there is no west side to the square now; nothing but hoardings and broken-up building-ground. And the square, as it now exists, is on its last legs, exhibiting that novelty in mathematical figures, a two-sided square, with one end of the church showing strangely mouldy-looking and dismal. Some of the houses, still standing, show the strong, solid construction of Queen Anne's days, and the open doors, where the big houses

are occupied by swarms of big families, show the remains of wainscoted passages and fine oaken staircases; here, we are told, once lived the first Earl of Carlisle, and yonder was the town-house of stout Sir John Fenwick of Northumberland.

And here, where once paced the gallant knights of St. John, each in his black cassock, with the eight-pointed white cross on the left shoulder—here, where, later on, the dignitaries in church and state of William of Orange, or Queen Anne, must often have assembled—we find a stand for costermongers' barrows, to be let out by the hour or day. And you may recall, if you can, looking at the terribly commonplace and dirty front of the church, how the original church was consecrated by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who, shortly before, had performed the same office at the Temple—the latter church still standing in almost its pristine beauty, while poor St. John's has come to this melancholy condition.

Down in the old crypt of St. John's, where, no doubt, still repose the bones of the old knights of Jerusalem, at the beginning of the present century used to be shown the coffin of "Scratching Fanny," so called, it was said, from the strange noises that might at times be heard from within; its occupant being that unhappy young woman whose perturbed spirit was supposed to have originated the mystery and scandal of the Cock Lane Ghost. The sexton of the period made quite a show of the corpse of this young woman, which remained in a state of wonderful preservation for half a century or more. The superstitions of an earlier age might have started the theory of a vampire and of nightly glimpses of the moon on the part of the dead; but more practical minds have insinuated that arsenic was the real preservative, and that, perhaps, after all, there might have been some mystery of crime wrapped up in the vulgar details of this curious affair.

To the north of the square is a narrow passage, rather a cut-throat-looking place, but safe and honest enough, no doubt, called Jerusalem Passage, in which once stood the little gate or postern of the priory. And here lived another Britton—known as the small-coal man, who gained a living by hawking coal about the streets; but a fine musical amateur, whose concerts, given in an upper room reached by a crazy flight of stairs, drew an assemblage of wit, genius, and beauty, of

which Handel may represent for us the genius, and the lovely and eccentric Duchess of Queensberry the wit and beauty.

And now a sudden turn brings us upon Clerkenwell Green; but if the name has excited hopes of some grassy clearing among the crowded maze of houses, the reality is disappointing. And yet the site is a fine one—even grand in its appearance, seen under such a sky as that of to-day, with massive cloud-banks above, and diffused and broken sunlight everywhere penetrating the haze of the city smoke. Out of the undefined valley below rises the massive bulk of a fine classic building, and the broad, open way sweeps down towards the brow of the hill, while on a nearer height rises a tall church, not beautiful in itself, perhaps, but with something stately in its pose, and standing out white and fair in the misty sunshine. If we could see the place again as in the olden time, with the mean-looking buildings on one side cleared away, a broad green stretching away to the church, and an avenue of trees shading the substantial houses of City dignitaries, we should realise the old charm of Clerkenwell, with its springs, and wells, and pleasant green fields sloping towards the sunshine, when thrushes and linnets sang among the bushes, and larks rose high in the air overhead.

Even to-day there are signs that in popular estimation Clerkenwell Green is not like any other wide thoroughfare, but has its own associations of a gay and festive character. The gaiety is contributed by a street ballad-singer, with a strangely white and ghastly face, which seems to accentuate the husky recitative and the coarse jokes that excite a short spasmodic laugh from the little crowd on the pavement. Nor are songs of birds wanting, performed by a clever little boy on a bird-whistle, examples of which the boy's proprietor—a dark-faced, foreign-looking man—is trying to sell at a penny each. And there is a sort of impromptu lottery going on right under the noses of the Middlesex magistrates if they happen to be looking out of the top windows of their sessions-house, the fine classic building just alluded to. A lottery that seems highly popular with small boys, and is managed by envelopes containing different coloured cards, a lucky colour bringing a great lump of sugar-stick, and the unlucky but a very poor ha'porth. Then there is a travelling refreshment-stall, which, as noon rings out from the tall

church tower, and as bands of workmen swell the crowd on the pavement, wakens into sudden activity. Coffee, ales, and cake are familiar enough, as eaten and drunk from the kerb, but when it comes to a brown and savoury chop, diffusing an appetising odour all round, it seems hardly fair to the lean and hungry little boys who have just spent their coppers on hardbake, thus to tantalise them.

All this suggests reminiscences of the ancient *Pré aux clercs*, the common field that lay between the priory of St John's and the sunnery higher up the slope. The priests' meadow, with its living spring affording refreshment to every passer-by, seems to have been always a place of resort for wandering minstrels and such like. Probably the very spring was one of those holy wells, endeared to popular superstition, with its yearly pilgrimage and festival; which festival became a kind of holy fair, attracting crowds to the place, for whom the priests of the city prepared mysteries and plays, which alternated with wrestling-matches and bouts of quarter-staff. And thus we hear, towards the end of the fourteenth century, of the court coming across from Westminster, and being entertained for three days by a mystery—a passion-play, no doubt—of which the parochial clergy of the City took the management, while a few years later came off a still more elaborate performance, beginning with the creation of the world, and coming down to comparatively modern times; a performance which it is not surprising to hear lasted eight days at least.

Besides the street musicians and the keepers of refreshment-stalls, a new element invades the scene in the shape of policemen, walking about with the easy, unconcerned air of men who are off their beat, and no longer under the dominion of stern official duty. Something in the way of sessions is now going on, probably, and the court has risen for a time; and besides the policemen, the green is resorted to by groups of people, who, standing about, seem all the while to keep an eye upon the big building that stands half-way down the hill. Here are prosecutors vindictively reckoning up the links in the evidence that is to send criminals to the treadmill, and here is the prisoner on bail, with the white-faced wife clinging to his arm, who is conning over her chances of the next few hours in gloomy excitement and bewilderment.

All this has been going on for generations. Substitute for the blue-coated policeman the civic watch, the rough-

coated country constables, Hugh Oatcake and George Seacole, with Dogberry and Verges, and the scene may be carried back as far as Shakespeare's time. Round hats will shrink into "cocks," and again expand into the broad-brims of the Restoration and Commonwealth; skirts will shrink and expand, bonnets will shrivel to nothing or spread out into the full-blown coal-scuttle, or "Mrs. Harris;" but the motive of the drama will be the same, the scenery not very different, the actors playing the same parts. There is no longer the excitement of the pillory, indeed. John Britton, who was a familiar presence to many who have hardly passed middle-age, records having seen a man pilloried and pelted on Clerkenwell Green—the pelting is still kept up, perhaps, for a circle of wire-netting encloses the churchyard, as if to keep out unsavoury objects that may be flying about. And the same observer saw a man flogged at the cart-tail in Red Lion Street, where we have just been. But if we have no longer such exhibitions in the streets, there are still whipping-posts in our prisons. The culprits probably are hit a good deal harder than of old, but then public sensibilities are not shocked in the process.

Before the present Sessions House existed, which is the centre of all this movement, the head-quarters of the justices were a little way to the eastward, nearer Smithfield Market, in a building which has earned a good deal of notoriety as Hicks's Hall. Some have supposed that a Roman military column once stood there. Anyhow, the place represented a central object in London Market-place, and when the hall of Hicks disappeared, and the memory of it grew dim, guards and coachmen on the road evolved a kind of mystic Hicks's Hall. The hall, however, was never anything but a sessions-house, built by a public-spirited city magnate, Sir Baptist Hicks, a wealthy silk-mercator, about the year 1606. On the completion of the building, Sir Baptist dedicated it to purposes of justice in a grand banquet to the magistrates of the city and county, towards the close of which the building was named by acclamation Hicks's Hall. Sir Baptist afterwards, by his indulgent dealings with the Court in the matter of credit for silks and satins, earned the title of Lord Campden, and built Campden House, on the breezy and pleasant height of Campden Hill.

Hicks's Hall witnessed some strange and

stirring scenes—the trial of the so-called regicides, the evolution of the Popish plot in the hands of Titus Oates and his brother informers. Even at the present day the care of public morals seems to rest in the hands of the associated justices of the peace, ; but in the days of Hicks they also kept an eye upon religion. The Quakers had set up a meeting-house, which still exists, in the Peel, just out of St. John Street, and at their Sessions the justices got wind of the matter, and sternly interrogated the chief constable of the district as to why he suffered a meeting of malignants to exist so near him. The constable asserted that he knew of no meeting, and, in effect, did not want to know about it. The justices were indignant, but presently went to dinner, and forgot all about the matter. "The Lord put it out of their heads," writes George Fox, who relates the incident. Probably the punch and port wine had something to do with the matter, for the justices feasted and made merry as well at quarter-sessions as at assizes, and there was a regular kitchen at Hicks's Hall, with provision for all kinds of merry-making. In strange contrast to which, we hear of a public dissecting-room on the same premises, where, it was thought, a useful moral lesson was conveyed in the sight of the bodies of poor wretches just cut down from the gallows being cut to pieces under the surgeons' knives. The present Sessions House, which was built in 1777, has no such exciting records as old Hicks's Hall. The traditional feasting and merry-making were still kept up, indeed, for a time, and the new building had its kitchen and dining-hall as of old ; but these rooms have now been converted into offices, and justices and judges take their luncheon abstemiously, on a biscuit and glass of sherry, perhaps.

Turning our backs to the Sessions House, and bearing in mind that the green marks the division between the ancient precincts of the Knights of St. John and the nuns of St. Mary, we may make a good guess that the tall church on our left will prove a guiding beacon in any exploration of the territories of the Benedictine sisters. In fact, although the church bears the name of St. James, it occupies the site of the church of Our Lady of Clerkenwell, the ancient convent church. The two religious houses were the making of Clerkenwell, which would otherwise have belonged

to Islington parish, with, perhaps, a small section attached to St. Sepulchre, while now for some centuries the district has retained an independent existence, and acquired a certain character of its own. St. John's parish, by the way, has generally been called and written St. Jones, and, by a curious coincidence, or by some mysterious attraction, a Welsh colony seems to have once been settled in the neighbourhood. There is the Welsh Harp as the sign of a tavern, and on the green itself stands a mean and cramped brick building, though of the favourite Queen Anne period, that was once the Welsh charity-school. The school is better lodged now at Ashford, Middlesex, but it was probably established here as being in the centre of a Welsh population. A Welsh fair was held close by in Spa Fields, attended, no doubt, by many drovers from Wales, who would find lodging and accommodation among their own country-people. Pennant, whose name will be pleasantly remembered by all students of London topography, took a great interest in the foundation of this school. And in Pennant's time Clerkenwell was still a pleasant suburb among the fields, with quaint groups of bathing-houses scattered here and there. Here was the London Spa, with its neat weather-boarded cottages, backed by a thicket of trees, with a glimpse of Isledon Hills beyond, a winding footpath leading up to a countrified, five-barred gate, which gave entrance to the little bathing-yard, while a stout old lady, with a yoke over her shoulders, carried a pair of clanking pails to be filled. The London Spa is still in existence in the form of a tall tavern at a street-corner, but the Spa Fields have disappeared, although the Welsh fair still goes on at Barnet, to which place it was removed about a century ago.

But, before leaving Clerkenwell Green, which has greater attractions than might strike you on a hasty view, we must make closer acquaintance with the church of St. James, with its crowded graveyard, that almost thrusts itself among the houses on the green. A correspondent of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, writing in the year 1788, describes the demolition of the patched and mended fragments of the convent church, where was the tomb of the Lord Prior Weston—the last of the Lord Priors of St. John's of the English Nation, if we except a temporary holder of the office during the reactionary period of

Queen Mary. Prior Weston is said to have died broken-hearted on the very day of the formal dissolution of his priory, although he had no cause for personal complaint, as he had been assigned the handsome pension of a thousand a year out of the property of his house. He might have felt it an additional sorrow that he would have to sleep his last sleep in the women's church, and not among his own knightly order. But the old prior's remains were carefully removed to the vaults beneath the new church—vaults which are so cheerful and well-lighted, being scarcely at all below the surface of the ground, that it is said that people were formerly attracted to the neighbourhood by the prospect of being eventually laid to rest in this light-some mausoleum. But a more potent attraction still, perhaps, was the fame of Clerkenwell as a place where people lived more often than elsewhere to a green old age. There must have been something sweet and wholesome about the air of the district favourable to longevity, and, although more crowded than of old, the district is still inherently healthy.

The former credit of the district is vouched for in the case of one Mrs. Lewin, of Coldbath Square, who lived to be a hundred and fifteen. And then we are reminded that Coldbath Square is still in existence, and well-preserved, with handsome Queen Anne houses, and that Coldbath Prison is also well worth seeing. But, in fact, Clerkenwell grows upon one, and all that must be left to another day.

IN SPRING.

WHERE are you, dear, this sweet spring day, I wonder?

You cannot lie there in that lonely tomb,
Beneath the hills ablaze with gorse, where sunshine
Doth kiss away drear winter's frown and gloom;
You cannot sleep there, silently unheeding

The pulse of life that's throbbing through the world—

The rush of life that thrills through every flower,
That close beside you in the earth lies furled!

Come back once more with springtime, hear the singing

That stirs the branches o'er your silent bed;
Each thrush, each blackbird, calls you in the morning,

That wakes to bless me, even though you're dead.

No, no, you cannot be so dead, my dearest;

You were so full of life, and love, and glee;

Where are you now when each dead thing is rising
From out the dark that lies 'twixt you and me?

Ah, can it be that you are only silent,

That something bids you stand aside a while,

hat you long to speak as I long for your presence,

As yearn to see once more your sweet, bright
mle?

That why I think of you this lovely morning
With longing that my heart must ever know,
Is because you stand beside me as I'm dreaming
Of days that were before death laid you low,

Yet as the world is waking from its slumbers,
Will you not rise and come to me, my dear?

For oh, you must remember that I loved you,
With such a love that I could know no fear.

Ah me! the earth has springtides without number,

Her lovely race is in a circle run;

Each year has its own spring; 'tis only mortals,

Who love and lose so much, that have but one!

THE MARY LILIES.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"AH, mais le pauvre petit! He wants sunshine, air, flowers, Estelle. Nothing of which he may have up here but the sun, indeed. And that, without the country air, is enough to suffocate him."

It was, indeed. Away in the broad streets of fashionable Paris, in its great squares, even in its jealously-closed houses, with their lofty rooms and wide windows, the heat was almost unbearable. Here, in the close dirty streets, where the poor herded in crowds in the miserable rooms, or close workshops, fevered and wearied with the toil that must never cease through the long scorching hours, existence became more like death than life. So a woman, in an upper room of one of the tallest and most dilapidated houses of the poor quarter, found it. A heap of work, by which she and her child lived, lay on a table.

This table, two chairs, a bed, and a painted chest-of-drawers, with little paint left on to tell what kind of wood it was supposed to represent, were the only furniture of the room with its faded walls and broken woodwork. But the tenant could not afford to be particular. She found it hard enough to pay for the shelter as it was, toiling from daylight to sunset. She had scarcely even time to notice anything but that great pile of work, which meant aching fingers and eyes, cramped limbs, dizzy, stupefied brain. But for a marvel the busy needle had ceased for a few minutes this morning. The reason for the momentary idleness was the only one that could ever make her hands let her work cease—her child.

The wife of the landlord had come upstairs, as she often did, to pay a visit to the pale-faced, sad-eyed Englishwoman, with the beautiful child, who had taken her fancy the first moment they had set foot in her house six months ago.

For a second or two, after her entry into the room, "madame," as she was always called, could do nothing but sit on the

chair and pant for breath, for she was stout, and the heat appalling, and the stairs precipitous as they neared the top landing. Then a sudden remark from her when she had at last succeeded in regaining her breath sent the work and needle flying from the worker's hands, which had not ceased even when her visitor entered the room, and the woman rose to her feet and went quickly over to the side of her child, who, seated on the floor, was languidly playing with one or two broken toys.

Madame, as she sat gasping and choking, had been looking at the child, and something in that white face, with its great dark eyes; in the listless languor of the tiny hands as they toyed with their poor little playthings; had sent a sudden chill of fear to her heart.

"Ciel! But how ill the child looks!" The exclamation broke from her involuntarily. Then the sudden, swift movement of the mother, the terror in her eyes as she sank down by the child and caught him in her arms, made her wish she had bitten out her tongue before she had uttered such a speech.

"It is air he wants," she went on, trying to undo the effect of her words, as the young mother still did not speak, but bent over the child, who dropped his toys, and flung his arms round her neck with a little sob of delight and weariness, that showed how he had been yearning for his mother's arms. But she had told him to play with his toys, and, by-and-by, when she had finished that piece of work, she would take him and pet him; and, with a patience pitiful in such a baby, he had tried to obey.

"Cannot you spare a few hours to take him into the country? See, a little hour in the night will make up again your work, and as for the money, it costs very little. It is not good; you have not taken one holiday since you came. The little one ought to go out from the walls and streets. Has not he a fête like other children?"

"A fête!" the other turned upon her with sudden passion. "Did not I tell you that he has no birthday?"

She spoke French with a faint English accent, and as, after the passionate outburst, she bent over her child again, she murmured in her own tongue:

"My darling! my darling!"

The good Frenchwoman looked on pityingly, not understanding the words, but knowing that they were terms of endearment.

Estelle looked up suddenly again. The listless languor of the child as he lay in her arms, perfectly contented now that his little aching head rested on her breast, sent a chill through her own limbs.

"Would it do him good—a day in the country?"

"Good! It would give him fresh life," answered madame. Then she dived into a capacious pocket, and brought out a few coins. "See, I will lend them; another day you will return them. Decidedly the child must go!"

A scarlet flush dyed the younger woman's face—a face whose firm lines of mouth and chin betrayed a pride that made it bitterly hard to accept a charity. But the child! The mouth quivered tremulously, and a sudden mist dimmed the beautiful eyes.

"Madame, you have been very good to us, and yet you know we cannot repay you."

"Bah! give me back the money when you can. See, I will help you dress the little one; he is a beautiful boy, but it is a great pity that you will always speak to him in English—he would make a brave Frenchman—le petit Basil."

A sudden shudder ran through the girl's frame from head to foot, while a look of almost loathing came into her eyes. But madame did not see it. She had lifted the child in her arms, and was telling him in her own tongue of all the beautiful things he was going to see.

"Look, then!" she exclaimed in triumph. "He smiles already at the thought of the sunshine and the flowers."

The two women dressed him together—there was little change to be made in his clothes, for he had but the dress he was wearing—laughing over him with that woman's laughter which is so near to tears where a child is concerned, caressing and talking to him in the baby language he used himself. Then the work was folded, the chairs put back into their place, the few little toys gathered up from the floor, the tiny slippers, that had just been taken off the baby feet, placed beside the white pinafore ready for him next morning, and then, with many injunctions from madame as to how they were to go, and admonitions against keeping the boy out too late, they started.

Madame, who had accompanied them downstairs, stood at the door and watched them down the street.

When she reached the end of it, the young mother turned, and made the child look too. They both nodded and laughed

back to the good landlady, the child kissing his hand, the thought of the country seeming to bring back some light into the mother's face as well. Madame nodded and smiled in return. Then something shut them out from her view—either the houses at the turn of the street, or a curious mist that had come into her own eyes.

CHAPTER II.

OUT in the country, far away from the great city, with its sun-scorched pavements and glaring houses, from its noise and dust, and the wearying ceaseless toil of its workers, new life and strength came back to the child. A faint colour tinged his cheeks, his eyes danced and sparkled, as they looked on the wonderful new world he had entered, and the soft west wind, as it played round him and tossed his brown curls, made him laugh aloud with delight. They had descended at a little station some distance from Paris, and then walked on as far as they could go, Estelle sometimes carrying the child, sometimes letting him run by her side.

They came at last to the green fields, with shady groups of trees, where not a soul, save they two, was to be seen. Then began the real delight of the day. She gave the boy the milk and food she had brought for him, and ate a piece of dry bread herself, too glad to see the new looks of the child to care what she had.

Then they began to play together. He ran about among the tall grasses, laughing with delight at the great ox-eyed daisies as they seemed to nod their heads at him, chasing a yellow butterfly only to leave it to scamper after a red one, filling his baby hands with the field-flowers, to bring them all back to his mother. Then, when he was tired, she took him in her arms, and there, as she softly sang to him, he fell asleep.

She sat perfectly still on the grassy mound beneath the shade of the trees, which tenderly sheltered her and her sleeping child with their branches. The golden sunshine lay upon everything beyond, and the soft west wind stirred grasses and flowers, gathering up their scents, to bring them to the two weary denizens of the great town, who had come out to them to be healed, while the birds overhead gave every now and then a lazy, contented twitter, as if satisfied that it should be so.

The child slept long, but still she never stirred, so perfect was the spell cast over her by the beauty of sight, and scent, and sound. After the life she had been leading

lately, with its almost intolerable burden of pain, and bitterness, and shame, of broken faiths and dead hopes, of toil, and want, and fear, it seemed as if to-day she and her child had wandered, for a space, into Paradise.

Afterwards, she wondered how she could have given herself up to the rest and peace. Knowing what had come upon her in her past life, she wondered, on looking back to this day, why she had not distrusted the sunshine, and the sweet scents, and pleasant sounds.

Once before, her life had been as fair, and into it had come the blackness of despair that shadowed it now. But to-day she forgot. She was so tired and wearied that she could do nothing else this afternoon but rest.

By-and-by, when the child woke, they played and laughed again; then, as it was growing late, she took him back towards the station. On their way from it they had passed a small inn, standing a little back from the road. As they arrived at it again now, Estelle was suddenly conscious that she felt faint and hungry. She had eaten nothing but that piece of bread since early that morning. She opened her purse and looked at its contents. She did not want to spend more than she could help, for she knew how hard it would be to repay the good Frenchwoman's loan.

The child decided for her. He had caught sight of the great clusters of white lilies that filled the little garden by the side of the inn, and wanted to go and look at them. As they stood in the paved courtyard, looking over the low wall into the garden, the landlady of the inn came to the door.

The child's rare beauty, so pathetic in its delicacy, attracted her as it did all women.

She made them enter, promising the boy as many of the lilies as he could carry. She herself brought some coffee and rolls; with a large cupful of milk, for which she would charge nothing, for the child. Then she took them out into the garden.

"Oh, mother!" cried the child, as he stood gazing in delighted wonder at the tall, fragrant flowers, "what are they?"

She laughed and kissed him, and showed how all the gold came off their petals.

"They are Mary Lilies," she said.

"Mary Lilies!" he repeated in puzzled wonder.

"They are the angel-flowers, all in their white robes and golden crowns."

"Angel-f'owers!" he repeated again to

himself. "My angel-flow'ers, I like you best."

Something in the awe and wonder of the beautiful eyes, as they gazed solemnly at the white flowers, brought back some of the strange chill that had seized his mother that morning.

She caught him passionately into her arms, pressing him close to her heart.

"Angel-flowers!" Something seemed to close up in her throat and prevent her breath coming.

Why should he like them best?

"Armand!" a clear, high-bred voice fell upon the sudden silence, as Estelle, unable to laugh and talk any more, still held the child in her arms, loth to part with him again, while the landlady, in her quest for flowers, had moved farther off down the path; "Armand, come here and see. Did you ever see such a beautiful child? And the mother—her face would do for that of the Holy Mother herself. It is so terribly sad, and yet so full of love."

A low balcony ran along this side of the house. A lady had stepped out upon it from one of the windows, and, partly screened by the creepers, had been silently watching the child and its mother, who had been too occupied to notice her.

A young man in the room, who had been listlessly gazing at a paper, trying to while away the time while they waited for the carriage—one of their horses having cast a shoe just in front of the little inn—rose from his seat and came with a slow, languid grace over to the window where his mother stood.

There was a curious likeness between this mother and son, in spite of the difference in their years, both in features and manner. The same clear-cut features, with their haughty, almost disdainful lines, the same high-bred repose, and quiet grace of movement. The greatest difference lay in the expression of the faces. While she looked out with keen, bright eyes upon the world, he, so much younger, seemed to have already lost most of his interest in its wants. He came over now, more to please her than anything else.

He stepped out on to the balcony by her side, resting his arm on the iron railing, as he carelessly bent over to look. At the same moment, the child's eyes caught sight of him, and a little, half-shy "Mother" from his lips, in her ear, made the girl turn and look up too.

The verandah was raised about four feet from the ground, and the young

mother holding the boy in her arms, stood in the middle of the trimly-kept garden, about eight or nine yards from it.

As she raised her eyes, they met those of the young man gazing full at her.

There was one moment of intense stillness, when the very breath refused to come from their parted lips, as the two looked straight into each other's horror-stricken eyes, when their white faces looked as if their every curve and line had been frozen into marble.

Then a low cry broke from the lips of the girl, more like the moan of some dumb, death-stricken animal, and she drew back to hurry towards the little gate.

"Oh, my angel-flowers!" cried the child in a passion of delight, as the good woman of the inn came running down the path, her arms full of the stately, fragrant flowers.

"Ah, there then, madame. He is welcome to them all. He is a little angel. Mais ciel! how ill you look! You are tired out. Stay and rest a little longer. I must go in now and attend on Madame de Vismes, who is waiting here with monsieur for her carriage. But in the little arbour—no, you cannot? Well, au revoir; you must come again with the little one."

The girl mechanically took the flowers that the woman heaped into her arms. She stood still while the child was being kissed, but heard nothing of the parting words of admiration and endearment, saw nothing of the pitying, half-doubtful looks cast at herself by the mistress of the inn, who did not at all like her starting out with such white face and lips. She was dizzy and faint, and her brain seemed to have lost its power of understanding.

As the gate of the inn-garden fell to with a sharp click behind her, the lady on the balcony, with something of the same shadow of fear upon her face, turned to her son. He had raised himself from his leaning position, and was standing rigid and upright, gazing after the retreating figure. His mother laid her hand upon his arm.

"Armand, who is that woman?"

"That woman!" He looked down into her face, with the very spirit of bitter mockery in his eyes: "That woman is my wife, and that child——"

His strained voice stopped with a sudden dry sob in his throat, and he broke into a short laugh, the desolate pain of which went like the stab of a dagger to the hearer's heart. He turned abruptly and

went back into the room. Madame de Vismes stood where he left her, her hand resting on the iron railing, on which she had laid it as if for support.

"And that child my grandson." She finished his sentence slowly to herself. "Après tout, it was a terrible risk."

Then the colour returned faintly to her cheeks, and some of the old brightness, born of her indomitable will and pride, to her eyes, clearing the mist of doubting fear that had dimmed their keenness.

"It was a terrible risk, a bitter necessity, but, after all, we could not have had a daughter-in-law without name and fortune, and he would not have given her up. He has the De Vismes will—thank Heaven! their pride, too, otherwise we should not have succeeded. But that pride—it is their weakness as well as their strength—it blinds even love's eyes. It might not have been necessary if Jules had lived, but Armand, as heir to the land, needed a different wife. But the child, he was beautiful; and the mother—he was right, she is a lady; but then something else was needed. But how pale she was, and dressed so poorly; it would be terrible if they were in want. Yes, it was a fearful necessity!" and the proud face paled again, and something like a shudder shook the stately figure from head to foot. "But it was a necessity; and why should she come here, of all places, with her child, to reproach us? Good Heaven! No, no; it had to be."

CHAPTER III.

It was long past the child's usual bedtime when the train reached Paris. His sleepy, happy chatter, which had broken in upon the stupor of his mother like some far-off echo, had ceased for some time, and his flushed cheeks rested heavily on her shoulder. Her arms were strained and tired, and as she stepped on to the platform she staggered a little. She would have dropped the flowers, which were troublesome to carry, cramped as her arms and hands were with the weight of the child, but an occasional sleepy murmur, "My angel-flowers," prevented her.

"Oh, how sweet the lilies are!" said a woman passing her. "You bring back the country with you; but they are too strong—a little, for the child."

But in the momentary faintness that had come over her, Estelle did not hear the warning.

After a second or two of rest, she made her way to one of the doors of the station.

Some omnibuses stood outside, one of which went close to her home. The moment's pause had given the other people an advantage. It was full, but the people seeing her pale face offered to make room. She could only get a seat far away from the door. The vehicle was crowded, and the heat suffocating. But she could wait no longer. She sank down in the narrow place made for her, faint and dizzy, only conscious of one thing—the fear that she might let the child slip from her arms. In this fear she held him tighter, so tightly, that the flowers in her hand were pressed close against his cheek; so close that his head partly rested on them, as upon some fragrant cushion, bruising their petals, and making their perfume still stronger. And the child slumbered on with flushed face and parted lips, excited still, apparently, by the beautiful things he had seen, for he murmured every now and then a broken word as if dreaming of them.

"Mother!" he cried once.

"I am here, darling," she said, and she bent down and kissed him. He opened his eyes once, and gazed at her for a second, then the heavy, thick-fringed lids fell again, and with a contented murmur he went off into a deeper sleep, for after that he did not speak nor move again.

His mother leant back in her place, her face white and still, her eyes gazing straight before her. And as the close air of the crowded omnibus, heavy with the fragrance of the flowers, seemed to lull her head and limbs into heavy, unwholesome rest, she did not see that one of the fragrant white blossoms lay on the very lips of her child, as if with a kiss claiming him in his purity and beauty as one of their own.

The omnibus came to a standstill, and the passengers descended. Estelle rose to her feet. How heavily the child slept! He did not even stir. She carried him towards the door where the light of the lamp fell full upon them. Then suddenly something in the strange stillness made her look down into his face.

There was a slight pause, then the conductor, with good-natured impatience, reminded her that he could not wait all night.

"Basil!" she said, touching the child's cheek. "Basil, we are just home. Don't you want to see the lights of the streets?"

She spoke in English, but the pause in the doorway, the strange still tone of her voice, the unearthly pallor of her face, arrested the attention of one or two who were still only a few steps from the omnibus, and they stopped.

"Dépêchez-vous, madame!" said the conductor again, holding out his hand to help her. He bent a little forward, and as he did so, caught a glimpse of the child's face. "Juste ciel!" He fell back in horror. "The child is dead!"

"Dead!" There rang out upon the heavy air a cry of such unutterable fear, agony, despair, that the men and women who heard it shrank back in terror, while the memory of it rang in their ears for many days after.

Estelle stood down in the road now, the child in her arms, the white lilies scattered at her feet. A little crowd gathered round. One woman in it drew close to her in her horrified pity and sympathy.

Estelle almost struck her away.

"Give us air! Do you wish to kill him? He is fainting—that is all. Stand back, and let us pass!" Then a sudden change fell upon her fierce passion. "I will take him to a doctor," she said quite calmly. The crowd, thrilling with awe and pity, fell back. A man who had been passing, and who had stopped to see what was going on, went to Estelle's side.

"I am a doctor," he said gently. "Let me see."

She allowed him to look. His silence confirmed their verdict, and with a murmur of pity, the men and women looked at Estelle.

There was not the faintest tinge of colour left in her face, her lips were terrible in their hard, strained lines. Her eyes, wide-open and brilliant, gazed steadily at the doctor.

"We are going home," she said, and all the human music had died out of her voice. "If he should open his eyes with all these people looking at him, he would be frightened."

"Yes," the doctor said gently. "You must take him home. I will come too. See, where is your address?"

He stopped a cab and put her in it, following himself.

"It was the flowers," said a woman, as the cab drove off, leaving the pitying crowd, and the fragrant flowers, all crushed and soiled now as they lay scattered in the dust. "Yes, they suffocated the child; as he slept they were killing him."

ARISTOCRACY IN AMERICA.

WHEN a man has lived five-and-forty years, off and on, in a foreign country, speaking its language and mixing widely with its inhabitants, both socially and commercially—for journalism has most important commercial aspects and interests—when his profession is to observe closely and clearly, and to report what he observes truthfully, for otherwise his reputation and his emoluments would speedily dwindle down to zero; such an observer may fairly claim an unprejudiced hearing for what he has to tell us. If only on this account, without reckoning its literary merits, *L'Aristocratie en Amérique*,* by Frédéric Gaillardet, former editor of the *Courier des Etats-Unis*, deserves not merely notice, but careful perusal, for its description of American aristocracy and other things besides.

The Colossus of Liberty giving light to the world will shortly start for America as a present from France. After the study of M. Gaillardet's book, its allegorical appropriateness seems questionable. Freedom, light, and republicanism are not necessarily inseparable. A republic can be very despotic and intolerant, and an empire very liberal. Was the Venetian Republic free or fond of light? Is not social exclusiveness said to be one strong characteristic of republican Switzerland?

"Liberty, equality, fraternity!" shout our Gallic neighbours, whenever the mob or their leaders are in the mind for a row. But too much liberty is a curse, and, called by its right name, is anarchy. Fraternity is a word without a meaning, unless when manifested as the fraternity of Cain and Abel—or of miners on strike who maltreat the brother-miners who choose to continue work and go down into the pit.

Equality is a flagrant falsehood and a glaring contradiction of existing facts. No two trees in the same forest, no two weeds in the same hedge, are exactly equal in strength and capacity to rise in the world. Darwin's philosophy, now accepted as at least an approximation to the truth, is based on the inequality of all living things; and, to come nearer to human affairs and interests, if all mankind were made equal at six in the morning, they would all, by their own act and will, be unequal long before six o'clock in the evening.

No people are more assured of that truth than Republicans in general, and the Americans in particular. They acknowledge it in practice if they do not in word, and this constitutes the leading topic—although many other subjects are touched—of M. Gaillardet's instructive volume.

"A land of liberty" is a fine-sounding title, but there are several sorts of liberty, and they do not always co-exist. Social liberty may be a thing unknown where political liberty almost amounts to licence. In the United States, much more than at home, people are compelled to do as other people do, and the compulsion often takes the form of tyranny.

Sunday, for instance, in France, Italy, and Spain, is looked upon as a day of rest. But rest with them does not exclude relaxation; on the contrary, it is synonymous with it. Americans, like the English—please remember it is a Frenchman who speaks—take a different view of the subject. For them rest means serious, solemn thought, and the absence of every kind of recreation. All places of amusement are rigorously closed. There is but one single town in all the United States which dares to infringe this interdict—namely, New Orleans, whose Théâtre Français is open on Sunday. Consequently, New Orleans is treated by Protestant preachers there as one of the Cities of the Plain.

The sight of people coming out of church is a melancholy spectacle in the United States. Instead of a crowd of smiling faces, none but grave and rigid countenances are visible. One would say that instead of celebrating the Creator's praise, they had been weeping at a funeral.

Nevertheless, religious services are the ladies' amusement—their only amusement—on Sundays, when the milliners' shops are shut. Their sole conversation that day is to ask the lady friends whom they meet, "What church have you been to to-day?" they never ask, "Have you been to church?" It would be an insult to suppose the contrary. It would never do for anyone to admit that no form of worship or sect had been followed, no service attended upon that day.

This social tyranny is only a remnant of the Calvinistic spirit whose intolerant influence continued to be felt long after the establishment of the republican government. A few extracts from the Puritan Code will furnish examples of the strange restrictions imposed by the lawgivers on personal freedom.

No one, says the law, shall make use of tobacco, without first having produced before a magistrate a certificate signed by a doctor of medicine attesting that tobacco is necessary for that person's health. He will then receive his license, and may smoke. Wine and spirituous drinks were subject to like restrictions. A domestic who got tipsy was fined five pounds sterling.

The sect of Quakers, or Friends, who refused to kill wild Indians, were put under the ban. "No Quaker," said the code, "shall receive board or lodging. Whoever turns Quaker, shall be banished, and if he returns, be hanged."

Article Seventeen. On the Lord's Day, no one shall run, nor stroll in his garden, nor elsewhere. He may only walk with gravity to church and back again.

Article Eighteen. On the Lord's Day, no one shall travel, or cook, or make beds, or sweep the house, or have his hair cut, or shave.

Article Thirty-one. Everyone is forbidden to read the English Liturgy, to keep Christmas, to make mince-pies, to dance, and to play on any musical instrument, except the drum, the trumpet, and the Jew's-harp.

Although this code is nearly two hundred years old, some of its rules were still in vigour in 1780, and even yet exist—so profound an impression have they left on the manners of the people. Thus, not long ago, the circulation of carriages on Sundays was legally suppressed in the streets of Boston, across which chains were stretched during the hours of divine service; and smoking in the streets of that city is still punished by a fine of twenty shillings.

In America you enjoy perfect freedom, only you may not, in most things, do as you please. The so-called temperance societies are not less oppressive than the religious sects. In some Northern states they have obtained the prohibition of all retail sale of wine and spirits, to the great annoyance of Europeans, who are obliged to elude the law by all sorts of artifices. Nor do Americans hesitate to follow their example. Pretended invalids manage to obtain from druggists alcoholic beverages under the alias of medicine.

If, in this land of discussion, political liberty is unlimited, social liberty suffers numerous restrictions. But it is the most precious liberty which is sacrificed. The right of founding a journal at will, and of voting on every possible question, are no

doubt excellent privileges; but the right of going to or staying away from church or the play at pleasure, and of drinking what your health requires and your stomach craves for, are better still. In fact, there was more freedom in many matters at Paris and Vienna, even under their most despotic governments, than there is at Boston and New York.

M. Gaillardet significantly remarks that between the present French Republic and the Republic of the United States there exists this similitude, that both were founded by men who were very moderate and indifferent republicans. No legislative body ever enjoyed greater privileges than the United States republican Senate, which is as far removed from all democratic principle as is the English House of Lords, except that it is not hereditary. In fact, the two senators of Delaware are representatives of the people with no greater reality than the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is a peer because he is the head of the English Church.

In the war of secession, the North was the conqueror; but to prevent the repetition of a fratricidal struggle, it is attempting little by little to substitute a centralising government for the federal government, and to replace the union by a unity. Such is the actual policy of the republican party. It is a slightly disguised tendency to the monarchical system.

On a previous occasion, M. Gaillardet, then a journalist, had ventured to write, and in America, too, that it would not be difficult to prove that the spirit of the American people is essentially monarchical. What is a monarchy but the fullest expression of order and graduated rank? Now, is there a country in the world where the love of order and respect for authority is more widespread, more innate, than in the United States? Independence exists there only in name; dependence is the rule in the realities of life. Liberty is a political formula, servitude is a social fact. In one word, there is not a country on the face of the globe in which more public voting is done, but neither is there one in which the individual is less at ease in his private acts.

In the United States you are only free on the condition of confounding yourself with and being lost in the mass. Whoever strays away from the body of the herd and quits the beaten path, is lost both physically and morally. You behold there a people, but you cannot find a man.

Society is mechanically organised and militarily disciplined. It gets up, eats, works, prays, and goes to bed at the same hour in every town of the Union. Those who do not dine with everybody else, run a good chance of not dining at all. The community moves together, all of one piece, like an engine, and, as it were, at the word of command or the pressure of a spring. Those who fail to keep the appointed times and orders of the barrack-life which is universally observed, are out of harmony with the rest of their fellows. Originality, caprice, exception, have not been foreseen or provided for in the social constitution whose rules are absolute and generally comprehensive. Eccentricity is crushed by its contact with the vast machine, like a foreign body fallen between the cogs of wheelwork. Subordination is what saves American society; it is the cement which holds its walls together, in the absence of those great buttresses which we call Laws.

In the struggles of political parties, how naturally the people falls into rank, and how blindly it obeys its leaders! How readily the workmen adopt the chief, the watchword, the electoral ticket, which reach them from Masonic or Tammany Hall! What discipline reigns over all their meetings, all their popular processions! How docile and submissive are passengers and travellers by railroad, steamer, or canal-boat to conductors, captains, and their regulations, often so annoying, not to say tyrannical. They are ordered when to get up in the morning, and they do get up; they are told when to go to bed, and they go to bed.

One day M. Gaillardet was travelling in a magnificent canal-boat on the Erie Canal, in company with M. Bacourt, the minister of France at Washington. At night the steward entered the chamber with a heap of slippers, a mute word of command implying, "Take off your boots." Every one took off his boots except those two gentlemen, who slept in hammocks. But the steward, unable to comprehend so inconceivable a piece of originality, came and pulled off their boots without uttering a syllable, and so forcing them to do as others did. Everything in America is a bed of Procrustes. Ill luck to the feet that do not fit it, as those travellers' feet did not on that occasion.

Is not such a community admirably pre-disposed for despotism? Monarchy is already there, the Monarch only is absent. The American's instinctive respect for

hierarchical ideas at home, is consistently combined with reverence for powerful authorities abroad. Louis Philippe had more sympathisers in the United States than any republican leader of France or England. M. Thiers was regarded as a Jacobin, while the Czar Nicholas was admired as a "smart man." Finally, no president was ever more popular in this republic than old Andrew Jackson, who, with all his talk about liberty, governed the country like a military dictator.

In a Viennese, as in a Parisian drawing-room, a formal introduction to the persons you meet there is not a matter of strict necessity. Every one assembled there ought mutually to feel assured of their general respectability. To doubt it is an insult to the host who receives them. Nobody hesitates to open a conversation with any one who happens to be sitting next to him on a sofa or at table. The case is different in the United States. Such freedom is not permitted by the North Americans, who keep at a distance, and put, as it were, in quarantine, every individual who has not been regularly introduced to them. Not until the quarantine is raised do American gentlemen become conversational and American ladies affable. These latter are the most charming women in the world, for they are graced both by cleverness and beauty, but so long as the presentation has not taken place they are only statues.

One day, when it was raining hard in New York, a freshly arrived Frenchman, ignorant of New World usages, a good fellow if not an exquisite, saw a lady making vain attempts to cross a swollen gutter in one of the principal streets. So he unceremoniously lifted her in his arms and deposited her safely on the other side of the gutter. Instead of vouchsafing to thank him, even with a smile, as he naturally expected, the lady stared at him from top to toe, and asked what right he had to dare to touch her. "I will remedy my mistake," the Frenchman answered, and taking the lady up again, he set her down where he had found her.

It is not certain that this story, which is told by M. Gaillardet, has not appeared in print before. But even if it has it is worth repeating, as an illustration that the republican ladies of the United States, by a sort of antithesis, are as proud as duchesses. The little democrats in name, are by nature veritable aristocrats. Beauty con-

fers on them a native nobility which outweighs the rank conferred by parchments; which latter, however, is by no means despised by young ladies on the look-out for husbands. On the contrary, it has for them the attraction of forbidden fruit which is not produced in a democracy. Happily it grows, and can be obtained, elsewhere.

In consequence of the absence of an obligatory "dot," or dowry, which causes so many interested marriages in France, and prevents so many unions of affection, American young ladies are pretty nearly at liberty to choose their husbands for themselves, and often become engaged before asking their father's and mother's consent. This is a great relief to the parents' purse, but also a great slackening of parental authority.

Young ladies in the United States have their own private circle of acquaintances without any previous permission from their elders. They come and go, and even travel alone; inconvenient results of which are rare, because, in the first place, if they are virtuous, they are not ignorant—the knowledge of good and evil forms part of their education—and secondly, respect for women is one of the great virtues of Americans, old and young.

It is a matter of temperament, and likewise of prudence; because every man who compromises a young woman and fails to marry her, is banished from society by the league of matrons, when he is not mulcted in heavy damages by the courts of law. The limits of flirtation, therefore, are never passed, unless the gentleman means business and intends to make a serious offer. Indeed, a man has often to be on his guard against tempting and even undaunted advances, of which the ultimate object is marriage. The part played by the two sexes is the very reverse of European practice and habits, proving that courtship, as well as government, has been revolutionised by crossing the Atlantic.

What most astonishes, and afterwards amuses, the stranger who lands in the United States, is their taste for processions and other public parades. Although the North American has no liking for obligatory military service, he is immensely fond of playing at soldiers. He fulfils his militiaman's task *con amore*; for him, it is much more than a duty, it is an enjoyment, a delightful display. The question of dress is of great importance. Every company invents a uniform at pleasure. The result is a most extraordinary medley.

Born Europeans give the preference to the costumes of their native land, and reproduce them more or less accurately. Consequently, in New York, you behold the march-past of legions, some in the English scarlet coat, others in the ante-revolutionary top-boots and breeches, the bright green costume of the Emerald Isle, the Scotch bonnet, plaid, and kilt, the Prussian helmet, the Austrian white-frock coat, and the French uniform of the Chasseurs d'Afrique.

After laying out money on these splendid disguises, the American cannot resist the temptation to show himself in fancy dress; and as the opportunities offered by reviews occur too rarely, each company organises excursions under the pretext of practising shooting at a mark. They don their becoming and showy uniforms, they hire a band of German or negro musicians, and they march out of town preceded by a gigantic drum-major, and followed by a negro carrying an enormous target.

Although the blacks are free in the Northern States of the Union, they are not admitted to the militia, except in front as drum-majors or clarinets, in flank as carriers of refreshments and iced-water, and behind as bearers of the target and other burdens. Liberty, equality, and fraternity permit them to aspire to the dignities of bassoon, sutler, and porter, and that is all.

As, in America, the year has only two seasons, summer and winter, so the life of man has only two ages. There are regiments of children who have scarcely done with school. Apprentices, when they enter a workshop or a store, reserve one or two days per month, "for the fulfilment of their duties as citizens." Like their parents, they parade, musket in hand, after a band of music, with imperturbable gravity, and they never fail to secure a young negro, who carries on his back the indispensable target. It may be affirmed with truth that there is no youth in America, exactly as there is no spring.

But military processions are not the only ones got up by Americans, young or old. They march in procession apropos to everything — elections, anniversaries, manifestations of all sorts. One of the strangest spectacles M. Gaillardet witnessed a few days after his arrival in New York was a procession of the Temperance Society. The diverse classes of artisans enrolled in this grand army assembled at an early hour. and each of them. at

the given signal, began to defile in the order assigned to it. Every battalion had its own special flags and banners. After the old and middle-aged men, came the children, already bound by an oath they could hardly understand. The line was closed by a printing-press mounted on wheels, bedecked with the national colours, and worked by a printer, who distributed the programme of the ceremony to the spectators grouped along the foot-pavement.

Extremes meet. This concourse of water-drinkers bore a wonderful resemblance to the closing of the Paris carnival on Ash Wednesday morning. The pale-faced, hollow-eyed, bow-backed teetotalers might have been mistaken for people the reverse of temperate. The truth is, that the man who abstains rigorously and systematically from the moderate use of a cordial so natural, so necessary, as beer or wine, commits an excess quite as great, though different in kind, as he who abuses alcoholic beverages. And besides the morbid look of all these ultra-temperate faces, their tattered accoutrements, the absurdity of the mottoes inscribed on their banners, the oil-paintings, or rather daubs, portraits of their famous adepts and leading abstainers, hoisted aloft between two deal sticks, fully justify the stranger's surprise, not only that such scenes should be acted at all, but that, when acted, they are neither hooted nor ridiculed. It is characteristic of popular ideas that what, elsewhere, would excite shouts of laughter, is here regarded as a serious business. Where a European would only see a ragged crowd, the American beholds a meeting.

No nation is more patriotic than the American. Nevertheless, it is the issue of several peoples; and one would say that these diverse ancestries would render a fusion difficult. Not at all! The New World has a marvellous power of assimilation. It is a crucible in which dissimilar metals are melted into one — American bronze.

Since the war of extermination waged against the Jews in Russia and Germany, considerable numbers have betaken themselves to the United States, where they are welcomed by fellow Israelites already established and thriving there. The Puritan States are not pleased at the prospect. Americans in general would not mind their arrival if, like the other immigrants from the North of Europe, they pushed forward to clear and till the Western wilderness. But Jews are not fond of land and its

culture. They go with the object of founding in Virginia, Louisiana, and other Southern States, houses of business and banks, where they can reap large profits, and lend money at high interest. That system does not suit the Yankees. The Jews are rather shy of the Northern States, where they meet with men as sharp as themselves. However smart a Jew may be, a Yankee is as good as a Jew and a half.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XIV. A WILFUL WOMAN.

THEO MEYNELL'S visit to the Midlands was drawing near its end, for Hugh North had written from Scotland to say that he was going back to London one day in the next week, and would be glad to take her back with him if Helen and John would let him stay one night at their house. Perhaps he would hardly have proposed this, for he thought she was much better with Helen than with Lady Redcliff, but a rather restless letter from Theo—perhaps her grandmother had not been so far wrong in describing her character—had told him that she meant to go back soon, and had had the effect of making him—the calm, cool, deliberate Hugh North—a little restless, too. It was bad to be amusing one's self in Scotland, it would be worse to be on duty close to London, when Theo was in Staffordshire. Hugh thought a great deal as he tramped over the moors, and in a new, uneasy, inexplicable sort of way, began to know that he loved his cousin.

Lady Redcliff was right. Theo was beginning to be tired of life at Woodcote. Helen was not an inspiring companion; still less so, married to the excellent John, who could not help being sometimes tiresome. Theo could not have any intercourse with the only people who interested her at all; she was often rather weary, rather bored, in spite of Aster and Wool; and as she read the postscript to one of her grandmother's cross letters, something in her nature seemed to go out to meet the impatient old woman. Her sins might be many, but heaviness was not among them, and, after her fashion, she loved Theo.

"When are you coming home?" she said in that postscript. "I sometimes think I should like to hear a human voice again. Those I do hear are the voices of

animals, and I suspect your present experience is not very different."

"I have brought you some gossip," said Mr. Goodall one evening, two days before Captain North was to arrive.

He went on to tell them how at Mainley Station that afternoon he had seen his friend, Morland, the proprietor of the model village to which Theo rode with him one day. And Morland had been making one or two journeys on business lately, and in one of these he had travelled in the same carriage with "that fellow, Warren," who was talking a great deal in a very loud voice to another man he knew. Morland thought he was not quite sober, but John Goodall charitably hoped it was only his awful vulgarity.

"He was telling this other fellow all about himself and his affairs, and among other things he said he was going abroad to see the world, and coming back in the spring to be married."

"I hope he is not going to live near us," said Helen.

"I hope not," said John. "But, Theo, you will be rather shocked to hear whom he is going to marry."

"It can't be anyone I know," said Theo with conviction.

"Well, I suppose I may say you know her. Anyhow, you took some interest in her. That pretty girl—that child—Gerald Fane's sister."

"Dear me!" said Helen languidly. "After all, Theo dear, the Fanes can't be nice, or they wouldn't do that, would they?"

Theo did not speak for a minute or two. She was extremely shocked, and very grave. She gazed absently at John, who was turning over a book, and then dropped her eyes on the floor. Having collected her thoughts, she said quietly:

"I don't believe it."

"Now, Theo, you really are unreasonable," said Helen.

"Did not I tell you," said Theo, "how much that girl disliked that man?"

John Goodall shook his head over his book and smiled provokingly.

"Money," he said; "or, rather, the want of it. There you have the explanation of most things, and, no doubt, of this."

"But how could Mr. Fane consent?" exclaimed Theo. "Oh, it is too horrid! How can you laugh, Nell! It is the most dreadful thing I ever heard in my life. I don't believe he knows anything about it.

I believe it is a plot between those two men."

"Well, I'm afraid he does know," said John, looking up. "He has looked very bad when I have seen him lately—ill and pale, and more discontented than ever. Do you remember how dismal he looked when he opened that gate for us the other evening?"

"Yes—yes, he did," said Theo half to herself.

"And I met him here in the village this morning, when I first went out. He was mooning along under my wall there, looking regularly white and wretched, as if he had been up all night. I thought, then, poor chap, he looked as if something had happened to him. If this engagement is a fact, and if he is letting it go on, I quite agree with you that he doesn't like it. He's not a bad fellow, poor Fane! I nearly asked him in to breakfast."

After the first words of this sentence, Theo had heard no more. But as soon as John paused, she said quickly and earnestly:

"Please listen, both of you. I have not kept my word; I have not been kind to that girl, because you did not wish it. But now Hugh is coming the day after tomorrow, and then I am going away; so you won't mind, Helen—you can't—if I go and see her that last afternoon. I have made up my mind, please. I must know if this horrid story is true."

"That could be found out by other means, couldn't it, John?" said Helen. "And if it is a plot between those men, as you said just now, Theo, perhaps the girl herself has not been let into it yet. And if you attack her on the subject, you may make a grand general combustion. There may be no end to the muddle; and is it exactly your business, Theo, do you think?"

"Am I my sister's keeper?" said Theo dreamily. "Yes, Nell; it seems to me that I am."

She got up and walked across to the door; there she turned round for a moment, smiling.

"I won't make a muddle," she said. "I won't ask her; but if she knows, she will tell me."

"And what will you do then?" said John solemnly.

"Oh, something!" said Theo as she shut the door.

"My dear," he said to his wife when she was gone. "I like Theo very much.

and I shall be sorry when she goes away, but for her own sake it is a good thing she's going. Her violent interest in these Fanes makes me nervous. Did you hear her—'Am I my sister's keeper?' It made me glad I hadn't asked the fellow in this morning, as I really felt half inclined to do."

"She meant nothing by that," said Helen. "You don't quite understand her yet, my dear John. It is all pure benevolence."

"Anyhow, it is a dangerous game, with mad, demoralised people like those," said Mr. Goodall.

Perhaps Helen herself did not quite understand Theo, who felt a strange, happy excitement when the appointed time came, and she was walking across the fields to Deerhurst with Wool for her only companion.

It was not a very fine day; there were wild clouds about, and the wind was moaning and threatening to rise to a gale, but the sun came out now and then and cheered the dull autumnal landscape. But this restless weather suited Theo better than quiet sunshine; there was mystery, uncertainty, in the strange shapes of the flying clouds, in the shadows that went sweeping across the country when the sun showed his face for a minute or two.

Theo's own life was not unlike one of those clouds; she, too, was blown by winds, and did not know where she was going. And none of her own people could have understood—not Helen, or John, or Hugh North—what a wild, secret pleasure there was in it.

After she had passed the railway the path was strange, but she could not lose her way, with the line of green firs on that ridge between her and the sky. Coming to the high-road, she walked for a few yards beside a little noisy brook, shaded by oak-trees turning brown, and then, just at the entrance to Deerhurst village, which skirted the sloping road in an irregular patch of cottages here and there, she turned into a path that led her up two grass-fields that grew gradually steeper, along by hedges bright with red and golden maple, till at the top she came into another lane close under those fir-trees to which her eyes had been directed all the way. Now she could see the other side of the country—the pleasant valley beyond Deerhurst, unstained by smoke, and scattered with trees. Down in the meadows far below her—for the ground

fell steeply away here—the river gleamed as it went slowly winding on its way.

A rough hedge and fence were between Theo and the fir-trees, which grew along a bank at the top of a steep field. They were much blown and strained by the wind, and even now were singing like the sea; but they made a pleasant shelter, and she walked along under them, going a little down hill, till she came to gates and haystacks, with Lombardy poplars leaning over them, and the rough old white gables and outbuildings of a house, set snugly in a little hollow of the ridge. It was partly covered with ivy and creepers, and much sheltered by trees—wych-elms nearly bared by the windy weather, beeches still a blaze of gold.

Theo stood still and looked at the quaint little homestead with a strange feeling of familiarity. She knew that this must be Deerhurst Lodge, for John had pointed out its roofs and trees, and she had discovered, without telling John, that she could see its chimneys from her window at Woodcote. He said it had been a manor-house once, and a much larger place than it was now. It lay on the edge of a great old chase, which had given it its sylvan name, and relics of those days, such as stage horns, had been dug up not long ago in the peat-beds by the river. Theo listened, and vaguely thought she liked to hear all this; but she found it much more interesting now.

The sun was shining as she turned in at the gate, and walked down to the door, with Wool marching solemnly behind her. A sudden smile seemed to light up the world; the wind was lulled, the garden was full of soft shadows and gleams; and the same change took place in Gerald, who came out of the door just as Miss Meynell approached it.

"Is it you?" said Gerald with sudden joy, and for a moment Theo could not help looking as happy as he did.

She gave him her hand, smiling, and blushing a little, and began to speak rather quickly, asking him if he thought she had quite forgotten his sister.

"Is she at home? May I go in and see her?"

"She will be too happy," said Gerald. "I told her I did not think you would be able to come."

"I was not sure about it," said Theo. "But I am going back to London to-morrow, and—"

She suddenly remembered the reason

that had brought her there, and then was ready to drive that horrid story at once out of her mind. How could one look at him and believe that he would let such a thing happen to his little sister?

But the experiment of looking at him did not answer; it plunged them both into a depth of shyness, a new feeling to Theo's proud, independent nature.

"Come in, please," said Gerald gravely, holding the door open.

Theo went in, and he took her up the oak staircase to the drawing-room, where Ada, who had heard their voices, was waiting in a state of joyful unbelief. She looked so happy, so affectionate, as she came forward to meet her, that Theo could not help kissing her. It is not quite certain that she knew what she was doing; a quick impulse carried her away, but if it had been necessary to win the heart of that lonely child, Theo's kiss would have done it for ever.

None of the three, except, perhaps, Ada, could have told afterwards how they spent that afternoon. If Theo thought at all, she thought that her only visit might be a long one; if Gerald had business that ought to have taken him away, he seemed to have forgotten it. The sun went on shining, and they took her out to see the garden, wandering down by ivy walls, past the orchard, into the lower garden, with its shady corners, and the great yellow walnut-tree hanging over the slope. A few roses lingered on the bushes down there, and when Theo came up from the garden, she was carrying a red one in her hand.

The sun went in, the clouds came crowding over darkly, the wind whistled, and it began to rain; but they were now in the house again, and Theo did not appear to notice the weather. Gerald did, however, and he went off to see that his pony would be ready to take her home when she chose to go. Men are selfish, and he certainly felt satisfaction in the thought that his cart only held two; but his selfishness was not bad enough to deserve its speedy punishment. When the girls were left alone, Ada moved to the low window-seat close beside Theo, and looked up into her friend's eyes.

"How good it was of you to come!" she said softly.

Theo looked at her gravely. That story, that horrid nightmare, which she had forgotten for the last hour, had come back to her again. She felt that it was impossible

to say anything about it, for Ada plainly knew nothing; yet she was going away, and could not bear the thought of leaving the child to her fate. Could her brother be trusted to take care of her? She thought so; and yet, suppose anything was to take him away!

Theo took out a letter and a pencil, and scribbled her London address on the envelope.

"May I give you this?" she said to Ada, "and I want you to promise me something, please."

"That I will," said Ada. "Oh, is it your direction?"

"Yes. Forgive me, dear, but you have not many friends, have you? Women friends, at least."

"You know," said Ada, while tears rushed into her eyes, "I have nobody but Gerald, and Clarence, and you."

"Thank you," said Theo. "Then I shall always feel that you belong to me a little;" and she kissed the girl's soft face again. "You must promise me this—if you are ever unhappy, or in any trouble—when your brothers are not quite enough for you—if I can ever be of any use to you, you will write and tell me all about it."

"I will promise," said Ada, rather solemnly, for Theo frightened her a little when she looked as grave as she did now.

The rain now began to dash furiously against the window. Theo looked up and noticed it for the first time.

"I must go," she said. "Wool, we must go;" and Wool got up, wagging his tail, from the rug, where he was lying stretched at full length in perfect contentment.

"You must have tea with me first," said Ada, "and then the shower will be over."

Pouring out tea for Miss Meynell, and feeding Wool with large pieces of cake, seemed like the realising of one of Ada's first and favourite dreams. It was not perfect, though; realised dreams never are. Theo was going away to-morrow; and Gerald, when he came back into the room, looked grave and bothered; something had wakened him to his sordid everyday life again.

"Clarence is come," he said to his sister after a minute.

"Is he? I thought I heard you talking to someone. I hope he is by himself?" said Ada, looking up anxiously.

"Yes," said Gerald.

Theo could not help watching him just then, and his grave looks made her say to herself:

"John was right; he knows."

He caught her glance, and came across the room to her, while Ada went to the open door and called Clarence to come and have some tea.

"It is quite a heavy storm," Gerald said. "You cannot walk back. I will drive you in my cart, if you don't mind; it is a rough concern."

"Thank you very much; but Wool and I don't mind the rain."

"It will be getting dusk; you must let me drive you," Gerald repeated. "It is not at all a nice walk in the dark."

"Thank you," said Theo softly.

"I must thank you for coming to-day," said Gerald. "I'm afraid it was disagreeable to you—but Ada is grateful, and so am I."

"I have wished to come all the time. I'm sorry it is my first and last visit," said Theo, looking on the floor. "She will let me hear of her sometimes, I hope, and," glancing up in sudden forgetfulness, "you will take care of her?"

"I should do that, even if you did not tell me," he said with a little reproach in his voice. "Did you think it was necessary to tell me?"

"No; please forgive me," she said, smiling; but all her self-possession had left her for the moment, and she knew that she was flushing very much as Ada came back into the room, followed by her eldest brother.

Theo was not facing the light, and she did not think that anyone saw the confusion that had overtaken her—not even Gerald—most of all she hoped, not Gerald—for she was quite indifferent as to what his brother might see or imagine. But she felt a little frightened at herself; the red rose she wore brought back to her suddenly all the strangeness of that quickly-flying afternoon, and the thought of Helen added an almost comic touch of dismay.

"What have I done? I have been very foolish—still, after all, what have I done?" she thought. "I must throw away this rose."

Her manner to Mr. Litton was cold and absent enough. Gerald now retreated to the other side of the room, and watched the rain as it came pelting harder and harder against the window. All outside was blackness and storm. Theo's eyes, too, wandered often to the window, as Clarence, who had just come from London, talked to her about the news of the day.

The noise of the wind and rain was loud enough to drown other noises, and it was

nly Gerald's quick ears that presently heard a rumble of wheels. He guessed at once what it meant; and he was not surprised, though the others were, when the drawing-room door opened, and Mr. Goodall came in, followed by a fair, handsome man. That cousin—Gerald well remembered him—he had taken her away after the wedding, and now he was going to take her away again.

John Goodall's manner was quite friendly; he shook hands with Clarence Litton, and talked to him about the weather, and explained that he had come to fetch Miss Meynell home. Clarence, however, was staring at Captain North, and hardly seemed to hear what he was saying.

Hugh North did not at first notice him. He had spoken coldly to Gerald, and glanced at Ada with something like curiosity, and then he had gone up to Theo, and they were standing together a little apart from the others. His manner was quite that of one who takes possession; it was clear enough that for him there was nobody in the room but Theo. His arrival did not seem to make much difference to her. She was very dreamy and absent just then, and after a few moments with Hugh, during which he talked to her, but she did not hear what he said, though she answered him with vague remarks of, "Yes—yes; dreadful, isn't it? Very good of you and John," he went suddenly forward to where Gerald was standing, looking rather forlorn and miserable.

"I am not to go home in your cart after all," she said, and if she had known how her face and eyes changed as she spoke to him she would have been startled at herself.

Gerald brightened suddenly as he looked at her.

"No," he said, "I'm not to be allowed to do anything for you; but it would be selfish of me to be sorry. I am selfish, though, and sorry."

He spoke in a low voice, and Theo answered him in the same.

"Thank you just as much," she said, smiling, and then she turned again to Hugh.

But just at that moment something happened which took her cousin's attention away from her and her doings. To John Goodall's great surprise, who had thought necessary to introduce him to Mr. Litton, Hugh North looked Clarence straight in the face for a moment, and with

an expression of contempt quite new to his quiet blue eyes, said:

"I have met Mr. Litton before. Hadn't we better start? The storm is only getting worse."

A curious sort of chill seemed to fall upon the ill-assorted company.

"Yes, very true; you had better say good-bye," said John to Theo, after an awkward pause, and she quickly did as he wished.

It all seemed such a horrid confusion, that she could not remember afterwards how she had parted with Ada and Gerald after their happy, short afternoon. Mr. Litton seemed to have disappeared after Hugh's recognition.

Both her companions were rather silent on the way home, Hugh especially so, and she felt a little angry and amused at the consciousness that she was in disgrace.

"Where did you know Litton?" John Goodall asked Hugh as they drove along.

"He was in the service, perhaps you know," said Hugh stiffly.

"You don't think well of him, it seems."

"He did not bear a shining character."

No more was said then, but when Captain North came into the drawing-room before dinner, and found Theo there alone, he went up and stood near her, and said very gravely:

"My dear Theo, those people to-day are not at all fit acquaintances for you."

Theo flushed crimson; she was extremely annoyed, and a reaction from the excitement of the day had made her temper very uncertain.

"I assure you, Hugh," she said, "you are not the first person who has told me so. Helen and John have been repeating it ever since I came."

"Then they could surely——" began Hugh.

"No, they could not," said Theo. "I like Mr. Fane very much indeed, and I am very fond of his sister," flushing more deeply still. "If I had had my own way, I should have seen a great deal more of them. As it is, I have only been there once, and that was to-day. I hardly know the brother, and I don't like him."

"You will understand me better, perhaps," said Captain North, speaking low and quickly, for Helen was coming through the hall, "when I tell you that Clarence Litton was the man who swindled and ruined my father."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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CHARLES DICKENS

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A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. RECONSIDERATION.

THE paragraph, copied from the Rye-cote paper, went the round of the local journals, and came immediately under Mrs. John's notice. She did not for a moment suspect it to be Mrs. Tuck's doing directly; the disclosure, she thought, had probably leaked out through her lawyer's indiscretion. Anyhow, it had leaked out, and was irrevocable, and there was nothing now for it but to break it to Archie herself. From miserable meditation upon this matter she was roused by the announcement of an unexpected visitor—no other than Ida.

Ida had gained Mrs. Tuck's consent to this visit with less difficulty than she had expected, for Mrs. Tuck was extremely anxious to convince Mrs. Pybus that the newspaper publication of the scandal was not her doing, and she modestly felt that Ida's assurance on this point would be sooner credited by Mrs. John than her own. Therefore, she consented to Ida's visit at last, and on two conditions—first, that Ida must make no rash and ridiculous promise to resign the property; and, secondly, that she must on no account enter the infected house.

Ida, having accepted these conditions, drove at once to Heatherley—not a very long drive—and sent in to Mrs. John a request that she would be kind enough to come out to her.

"I am quite ashamed to have to ask you to come out, Mrs. Pybus, but Mrs. Tuck is so nervous about infection that she made me promise not to enter the house. Could you spare a few minutes for a drive with me, or a walk?"

"I think a walk would do us both more good," answered Mrs. John, as she kissed Ida affectionately, while the girl, with unusual demonstrativeness, kept and pressed the hand held out to her.

Each saw in the other's haggard face the reflection of her own trouble—the same trouble.

"You've been ill?" asked Ida anxiously.

"Just what I was going to say of you, dear. I've been troubled and anxious, that's all. But you have been really ill?"

"I've not been quite well—a little unstrung. It was nothing. I'm all right now," said Ida hurriedly and nervously, with a conscious blush which she tried to hide by turning away to give the coachman directions to put up for an hour.

Mrs. John, thinking over all the blush meant, hurried in to put on her bonnet, and rejoined Ida in a minute.

"Let us go my favourite walk down by the river, dear; I take it every day."

It was the walk Archie had taken with Anastasia.

As Ida did not broach the subject, Mrs. John volunteered information about Archie—how he was, how soon she hoped to be able to move him, etc. When at last she paused, Ida turned the conversation. Through shyness, and even through a nervous eagerness to hear more, she changed the subject.

"Mrs. Tuck was distressed about that—that paragraph in the newspapers. She feared you might think it her doing."

"Oh, it was about that you came?" cried Mrs. John, unable to conceal her disappointment at Ida's constrained tone, rather than at her words. She imagined now that the girl, believing Anastasia's story of Archie's brutality, almost resented the mere mention of his name. This, then, was the meaning of her worn and wan face

— wounded pride, not love-sick anxiety. Therefore Ida avoided the subject, and changed the conversation. Thus thought Mrs. John, not unnaturally, since in her own inmost heart she felt that the evidence against Archie, in the matter of Anastasia, was overpoweringly strong. Yet, in spite of, or rather, perhaps, because of, her own sense of the strength of this evidence, she resented Ida's supposed acceptance of it, and consequent shrinking from the merest mention of the name of one who, upon that evidence, had behaved hardly less basely and abominably to herself than to this Miss Bompas.

Such was Mrs. John's construction of Ida's constrained manner. Therefore, having herself a good deal of pride, she was not going to force an offensive subject on her visitor. If she could have satisfactorily explained Archie's conduct, she would, no doubt, have put her pride in her pocket and set things right; but this she was unable to do, for she had not yet ventured to question him about the business. Of course, the sense of having no explanation to offer unconsciously strengthened her resolve to avoid an unwelcome topic.

"Oh, it was about that you came! It is very good of Mrs. Tuck to feel so concerned about it; but I never imagined for a moment that it was her doing. I knew she would, if she could, have kept it secret; but it was not possible. It was foolish of me to expect it. I ought to offer you my congratulations, though," turning suddenly towards Ida with the slightest tinge of bitterness in her tone.

Ida was deeply hurt.

"I don't think I have deserved them—from you," she answered in a tone of reproach, which made her meaning unmistakable.

Mrs. John did not mistake it, and was remorseful.

The girl looked so wretched, and had such reason for looking wretched, whatever view she took of Archie's conduct and circumstances, that it seemed to Mrs. John cruel to fling this stone at her.

"You deserve nothing but kind thoughts from me; but, Ida dear, if I've had for a moment an unkind thought of you, you must forgive me. I'm so unhappy, dear, and have had so much trouble lately, that I've got to think everything and everyone must be against me," breaking down a little.

"But it isn't true; it isn't right; it will yet come right," cried Ida incoherently with answering emotion.

Mrs. John, thinking she alluded to the Anastasian affair, kissed her with irrepresible fervour (as they were now to themselves in the very solitude where Archie and Anastasia had sat together), and at once opened her whole heart as to this matter. She had, of course, no other evidence to offer than her own immovable conviction of Archie's innocence and Anastasia's guile; but a conviction held and expressed with such strength is infectious, especially when the person to whom it is to be communicated is so perfectly prepared to receive it as Ida was. It may well be imagined, then, that this outpouring of Mrs. John's was at least as great a relief and comfort to Ida as to herself, and that the girl returned to The Keep with a lightened heart.

Here she relieved Mrs. Tuck by her report.

"She never believed for a moment that it was your doing."

"She thought it Richard's, I suppose?"

"It never occurred to her to think of him, or of any one in particular. She said it was foolish of her to suppose that it could be kept secret."

"And so it was, my dear. It's no use trying to keep secret what it's every one's interest to tell—that is, a scandal of any sort."

"I don't see what interest it is of any one's."

"It's just this, my dear; no woman would know how good she was if there weren't bad people to point to. There's no merit in being white where there are no blacks, is there? Besides, this is a county business," added Mrs. Tuck with much dignity.

"It's a matter of some importance into whose hands a great estate and position like this may fall. People are naturally relieved to find that a fine old property is not going to be squandered in low debauchery, but is to pass into good hands. I don't mean Richard's," she hastened to add, remembering that frugality was not her nephew's forte. "For I intend to have every penny of the property so tied down that he will be wholly dependent on you. I know what you're going to say, that he has shown himself so noble and disinterested, and so on, that it would be a sordid return on your part to keep all your money in your control. All that kind of sentiment is very well before marriage, but it doesn't wear, my dear; and that's the truth. A woman is none the worse for always having something to give; for, as

Solomon says, 'love's like a horse-leech—it's kept lively by starving a bit.' Besides, the very generosity and disregard of money Richard has just shown proves him unfit to be trusted with it; and I'm not going to let you trust him. There, there, my dear, you must let me have my own way in this matter."

No one knew better than Mrs. Tuck that Ida had neither marriage, nor marriage-settlements, nor Dick's generosity, nor Dick himself, in all her thoughts at the moment; and for this very reason the good lady spoke as she did. Attributing to their true cause—the rehabilitation of Archie by Mrs. John—the better spirits in which Ida had returned, she thought it seasonable to remind her in this manner of Dick's merits and claims, and to speak of her marriage to him as the most certain and settled thing in the world. What she said at the same time about Ida having her fortune absolutely secured to her, she meant; in part, because she feared Dick's extravagance; and, in part, because she hoped through Ida to keep the control of the property pretty much in her own hands.

It may be imagined in what spirit poor Ida heard these strong dissuasions against being hurried away by her excess of love, and trust, and admiration into endowing Dick with all her worldly goods.

"I have no right to it," she said, sitting down wearily.

"No right to what, dear?"

"To this property. Dear Mrs. Tuck, I am very unhappy about it."

"Now, Ida, I knew if I allowed you to go, you'd get wheedled into all kinds of quixotic notions. You've no right to it! That's Mrs. Pybus's impartial opinion, I presume?"

"She never spoke about it, or thought about it. It's not like her, and it's not like you to think it of her," cried Ida with much warmth.

"Tut, my dear, I'm old enough to think ill of any one," said Mrs. Tuck with the utmost good-humour. "But I might have known that no one need be at the pains to put such notions into your head, for it's full of them already. You're no more fit than Richard to have the charge of the property, and I see it will end in my having to take it from you both."

Under cover of this jest, Mrs. Tuck withdrew her forces for the present, with a secret determination to renew the attack after she had persuaded Dick to make first a determined demonstration in force.

Later on the same day she intercepted Dick on his departure for Ryecote.

"Dick, you're always in Ryecote now."

"Business, aunt—business," sighed Dick with a martyr-like resignation.

"Business!" exclaimed his aunt with a short laugh, which conveyed her idea of Dick's business aptitude and devotion better than barbed words. "You've no business there now," punning on the word. "You should stay at home and let Ida see a little more of you."

"Why, my dear aunt, she sees almost as much of me already as if we were married, with a similar result," with a sneer which left no doubt of his cynical meaning.

"It's modest of you, any way, to feel that the less she sees of you the more she'll like you."

"I'm modest, I admit," answered Dick apologetically; "but it's no more true of me than of any other fellow, that it's a mistake to let a girl see too much of you. You should leave a good deal to the imagination in love; 'The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,' etc., etc."

"Well, you've left enough in all conscience, for it needs a stretch of the imagination to fancy you in love at all."

"I don't know what you'd have," grumbled Dick; "I can't be always in a fit or a fever. It isn't my line. Besides, Pygmalion himself would be chilled by such a girl."

"She isn't demonstrative, and so much the better. A girl who wears her love on her sleeve changes it as lightly as a dress."

"And it's the same with men; yet you're down on me because I don't wear my heart on my sleeve, but in the right place, my dear aunt; that's where you'll always find it—in the right place."

"I wish Ida could find it in its right place at present—in her keeping, that is. Seriously, my dear Dick, I wish you'd take a little more trouble to prove that you cared for her."

"What does she want?" cried Dick in some exasperation. "I'm not a marrying man, and I can't afford to marry, and yet I pressed her to marry when she hadn't a penny. Isn't that proof enough that I cared for her? And because, now that she's turned out an heiress, I've proper pride enough to keep aloof a little, and let her reconsider her engagement to a poor man, I'm accused of not caring for her!"

"Pshaw! You know as well as I do that Ida doesn't care two pins about your

being poor, so it's no good getting on those stilts, Dick. But as for reconsidering her engagement on the other ground of your indifference, it's quite possible she might."

His aunt's strong hint induced Dick to reconsider his magnanimous attitude towards Ida. He became much more pressing and pronounced in his attentions. He was ever on the watch to do her little but thoughtful services, and his eyes followed her every movement with "a mute observance." He now rather sought than shunned tête-à-tête interviews with her, in which he would embarrass and humiliate, even torture her, by the ardour of his attentions. Yet to evade or repel them seemed impossible. How could she? If she had not broken off the engagement when she had ungenerously suspected his disinterestedness, how could she now, when he had put it beyond doubt that he loved her for herself alone? He had never been so tender, eager, ardent, as in those few days when she was supposed to be penniless. On the other hand, he relapsed into his former reserve, with a natural and noble dignity, when she had recovered her position of heiress. Why, Mrs. Tuck had explained to her. She had quoted to her his magnanimous words, that "proper pride made him keep aloof, to allow her, in her new circumstances, to reconsider her engagement to a poor man." Only when it was suggested to him that this proud reserve might be misconstrued into indifference did he again press upon her his attentions.

But then these attentions were terrible to her. The touch of his hand was as a sting; of his lips as a burn—exciting loathing not so much of him as of herself. No one in the world could feel more deeply than she the degradation of submitting to the caresses of a man for whom she cared nothing, while her whole heart was another's. Yet there seemed now no way out of the false position into which she had drifted—no honourable way. After a week of insupportable, because incommunicable, wretchedness, she resolved on a second visit to Mrs. Pybus.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

WARWICKSHIRE. PART II.

As we leave Coventry behind on the way to Warwick, we soon pass into a country rich and fertile, with green meads and sunny cornfields, where the strife and

turmoil of modern life are succeeded by a soft idyllic calm. Such stir of life as exists is rather due to memories of the past, than to the everyday needs of existence; and of the knot of passengers who are left by the train at Kenilworth station, there are, perhaps, a dozen who are drawn from all corners of the earth to visit the stately ruins of the castle, to the one commercial traveller with his inevitable cases of patterns, or the stray farmer returning from Coventry market. The little town, with its nice old church among the pleasant meads, seems in spite of itself to be drawn towards the castle, and a little settlement has clustered about the castle green, beyond which, in forlorn magnificence, rise the ruined, ivy-covered towers of the castle.

It is difficult to account for the first choice of Kenilworth as a place of strength, for the position is not strongly commanding, and it stands apart from any great highway or navigable stream, while the great pool or lake which formerly surrounded the castle, and protected it from sudden attack, seems to have been in a great measure artificial, and formed by damming up the insignificant streams that flow beneath the walls, which might easily have been drained and laid dry as now, when no vestige remains of this lake, that at one time formed a conspicuous patch of water in the county maps. And yet Kenilworth was strong enough to defy the whole power of England's king, holding out for six months against Henry the Third, and this when the cause of the De Montforts seemed lost, and when the lord of the castle was a fugitive on foreign soil. In the end it was only the progress of disease among the garrison that brought about a surrender, when the captain and his gallant band marched out with all the honours of war, and upon highly favourable conditions. Something of this toughness of defence must be attributed to the excellent character of the Warwickshire fighting men. Some of the best soldiers of mediæval wars were of this county, and a familiar figure of the time was the Warwickshire knight, who farmed himself out to some great noble—himself and his men-at-arms—stipulating for a settled revenue, whether fighting or home sitting, while, however, his patron went shares in all that was made in public or private war, either in plunder or ransom.

Kenilworth thus came into the possession of the Crown by right of conquest, and it was granted to one of Henry's younger

sons—Edmund, who bore the title of Earl of Lancaster. In the time of this Edmund, and in the reign of his brother, Edward the First, the castle was the scene of a magnificent tournament, one of the grandest displays ever known of mediæval chivalry; a gathering attended by knights of warlike fame from every European court. Roger Mortimer was the challenger, and a hundred knights contended for the prizes under the eyes of as many fair ladies—Roger's Castilian bride among the number probably—whose mantles of rich silk were the envy of the dames of lesser degree, to whom these fabrics were a dazzling novelty. A sort of chivalrous equality was maintained among the competitors, among whom were princes and nobles of high degree, the only precedence being that acquired by doughty deeds of arms; and traditions of the noble gatherings at King Arthur's court were revived in the Table Round, which was daily spread for the assembled knights, loaded with all the abundance of a rich, prolific land.

The lordship of the house of Lancaster came to an end by the death and attainder of Edmund's son Thomas, the saint of popular hagiology, who was beheaded at Pontefract Castle; and the king, Edward the Second, entered into possession of Kenilworth, which was soon to become his prison. At Kenilworth Edward was compelled to sign his abdication, and lingered here a while in captivity, presently to be hurried away over Cotswold to his fate at Berkeley Castle. But in the following reign Kenilworth again became the seat of the princely house of Lancaster. John of Gaunt, by his marriage with Blanche, the heiress of the old house of Lancaster, revived the hereditary honours of the family, and entered into the best portion of its vast possessions. The fine old Norman keep—which still exists in its massive strength, less a ruin than the buildings of later centuries which surrounded it—this grand keep, which forms the north-eastern angle of the central block of buildings, was retained by John of Gaunt as the principal feature of the new castle, but the old battlement walls, and towers, and soldiers' quarters were replaced by kitchens, banqueting-halls, and convenient lodgings, that marked the new era of luxury and magnificence.

From this period, Kenilworth, no longer a place of arms, enjoyed the more placid dignity of a princely residence, but neglected and deserted, as by the rise of

the house of Lancaster to the throne, it became one among the many royal castles. Thus we hear nothing of Kenilworth during the Wars of the Roses, and, although Henry the Eighth gave his name to a portion of the castle now destroyed—Henry's Lodgings—yet Kenilworth retains no other memories of the royal line till the days of Queen Elizabeth, who bestowed the place—a kind of white elephant, costly to keep, and of no great practical advantage—upon her favourite, Dudley, Earl of Leicester. And at this point begins the real interest of the history of Kenilworth, when it shone for a brief period as the scene of a brilliant semi-regal court, when statesmen and courtiers thronged its chambers, and the great Queen herself was a frequent visitor.

The Dudleys were new men, the descendants of the hated minion of Henry the Seventh, and the sudden rise of the family, its greatness, its vicissitudes, and its speedy extinction, form one of the most striking pages in the annals of the aristocracy. Here was one brother, a mighty Earl, ruling over the grand castle of Warwick and the many lordships belonging to it, while the younger, supreme in Elizabeth's favour, disposed of the resources of the land in a way that was only limited by his royal mistress's inherent prudence and common-sense; while their father, who had almost grasped the throne through his eldest son's alliance with Lady Jane Grey, had perished with that son on the scaffold, while all the possessions of the house had been confiscated.

On his acquisition of Kenilworth, by the favour of Queen Elizabeth, Leicester seems at once to have formed the plan of making it the most splendid residence in the kingdom. The stables, the pleasure, the aviary, and delicious gardens with fountains and bosquets, the park, the tilt-yard, were all newly established on a magnificent footing. The old buildings were everywhere renovated and restored, windows pierced in the old Gothic towers, and light and warmth introduced into the chilly old halls. A new range of buildings, palatial in their arrangements, was designed for the private and state apartments of the great Earl; the lake was cleansed and deepened, and made gay with shallows and pinnacles with their brilliant pennants. Over this palace of his the Earl expended as much as sixty thousand pounds—a sum equivalent to half-a-million in the present day.

"Who that considers the stately seat of

Kenilworth, every room so spacious, so well belighted, so high-roofed within, so seemly to sight by due proportion without. In daytime on every side so glittering by glass, at nights by continual brightness of candle, fire, and torch light, transparent through the lightsome windows, as it were the Egyptian Pharos, reluctant unto all the Alexandrian coast."

Thus writes an eye-witness of the culminating splendours of Kenilworth; and the picture of the magnificent palace all aglow with lights shining over the darksome country, forms a striking contrast with the quiet, restful desolation of to-day.

One bright-eyed youth must have been attracted to all this magnificence and brightness, as the moth to the candle. A dozen miles of pleasant country-road, with a lift from friendly carriers on the way, would have been no insuperable obstacle to young Will Shakespeare, when all this state and show were to be seen at the end of the journey. At the time of Elizabeth's last and most imposing progress to Kenilworth, Shakespeare was eleven years old, and we could swear that he was a witness of the quaint and picturesque splendour of the revels—the floating island upon the pool, bright and blazing with torches, upon which were clad in silks the Lady of the Lake and two nymphs waiting on her, who made a speech to the Queen, which was closed with cornets and other loud music. Also the six huge trumpeters with silver trumpets, who sounded their flourishes from the battlements over the gate, and the porter, Hercules, with his club, strong and defiant, who subsided with meekness and verse at the sight of the Queen; with the various and rare sports—the fireworks, and Italian tumblers; the clownish countryfolk, who were introduced to make sport for their betters; the country bride-ale, when the wedding-guests were set to run at the quintain, with morris-dancing, and all the rest of country revels. Then, that there might be nothing wanting these parts could afford, hither came the Coventry men, and acted the ancient play long since used in that city, called "Hock-Tuesday," setting forth the destruction of the Danes in King Ethelred's time. While the spectator might behold all sorts of classic monsters disporting in the pool—

Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

"Triton with a wrinkled welk," the chronicler of the period has it, with less poetic resonance. Spenser, perhaps, was

there with his friend, Philip Sidney, the nephew of the proud lord of Kenilworth—for Spenser, too, has Triton with his wreathed horn—and the two great poets of the century may have met all unknowingly by the trim margin of the lake, and marvelled at the mermaid eighteen feet long, and at Orion riding upon his dolphin with rare music.

A rare Shakespearean character, too, is Denham, the gossiping chronicler of all these revels—a protégé of the great Earl's, who has got him his place as usher of the council, for whom all the great men of the day have a civil word, and who is the oracle of the tavern where he takes his daily refreshment. A man who glories in his office is our usher. "If any make babbling, 'Peace,' say I, 'wot ye where ye are?' If I take a listener or a pryer in at the chinks or at the lock-hole, I am by-and-by i' the bones of him. But now they keep good order; they know me well enough. If he be a friend, or such a one as I like, I make him sit down by me on a form or chest. Let the rest walk, in God's name."

Our pleasant, garrulous usher gives us a glimpse, too, among the crowd of mummers and maskers, of a quaint and interesting figure—the last minstrel, he may be called—one of the last of the old English minstrels, or gleemen, in whom our existing tribe of wandering performers may claim a quite distinguished ancestry. Even then he is an antique and old-fashioned figure, this ancient minstrel, "shaven and ruffed, with a gown of Kendal-green, seemly begirt in a red Cadiz girdle, and from that a pair of capped Sheffield knives, with his red nether socks, a pair of pumps on his feet, with a cross cut at the toes for corns, not new, indeed, yet cleanly blacked with soot, and shining as a shoeing-horn. About his neck a red riband, and his harp in good grace dependent before him." He is a squire minstrel of Middlesex, and about his neck he wears his pewter chain of office, from which hangs a metal escutcheon of the ancient arms of Islington—for, when no longer at courtly revel or festival, it is at merry Islington that he sounds his ancient harp; nor is it silent among the wells and meads of Clerkenwell, while he pipes forth curious decrepit strains from which life and meaning have almost escaped. Already he is looked sourly upon by knights and dames who have learned to love the soft Italian music, and before long he will find himself classed as a vagrant by Act of Parliament, and his

privileges, which are older than the proudest noble's, shorn away at a blow.

With the titles of his *Lady of the Lake* and his *Last Minstrel* suggested to him in Denham's pleasant chronicle, it seems a little unkind in Walter Scott to designate the usher of the council as a garrulous coxcomb, or something of the kind, when working him up into his *Kenilworth*. But Walter Scott is the authority now most in vogue, and his novel may be seen in the hands of most of the visitors to *Kenilworth*, who look for Amy Robsart's chamber, and identify the scenes of the novel with pleasing faith in the great enchanter. But the probabilities are against Amy having ever visited *Kenilworth*, and assuredly she was in her grave long before Elizabeth's famous progress. The Earl's marital cruelty and treachery are, however, probable enough.

It is a point not yet altogether cleared up whether the Earl of Leicester was not actually married to the jealous queen. But, anyhow, beside Amy Robsart, he secretly married, and afterwards disavowed, Lady Douglas Sheffield, daughter to Lord Howard of Effingham, of Armada fame, and widow of Lord Sheffield. Of this marriage, if marriage it were, a son was born, who took his father's name, Robert Dudley, and became afterwards noticeable. Then the fickle Earl was captivated by the charms of Lettice, daughter to Sir Francis Knolls, and widow of Walter, Earl of Essex; and in this case his bride declined any ambiguous or secret marriage, and was acknowledged openly as his Countess. Leicester, it is said, would have poisoned the other claimant, Lady Douglas, who, in fear of her life as long as she felt herself an obstacle to the plans of the cruel Earl, married in what she considered ambiguous connection one Sir Edward Stafford. In spite of growing age, the Earl, it is said, coveted still another wife, and had prepared the poison that was to remove his Countess; but in her the Earl had met his match, and by dexterous interchange of the poisoned bowl, himself was made to drain the fatal draught, and presently died.

On the death of the Earl it was found that he had bequeathed a life estate of *Kenilworth* to his elder brother Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, who in contrast to the other, is often called the good Earl of Warwick, but after that to his illegitimate son, as he called him, Robert Dudley, now known as Sir Robert. As Ambrose died

soon after his brother, Sir Robert entered into possession of his splendid patrimony. He had been brought up in accordance with his father's degree, in every knightly accomplishment, and had married at an early age the daughter of a neighbouring landowner, Sir Thomas Leigh, of Stoneleigh Abbey, who was also an Alderman of London. As long as Elizabeth lived the young man accepted his position, but on the accession of King James he made strenuous efforts to establish his legitimacy and obtain the title and honours of which he thought himself unjustly deprived. There was some strong evidence of a valid marriage, and as the claimant was in actual possession of the estates, and of a character worthily to maintain his father's title, it seemed as if his claims would be eventually recognised. But the Dowager Countess, so reputed, seeing that her own dower and position were imperilled—as to establish the marriage with Sir Robert's mother, Lady Sheffield, would nullify hers—the Dowager Countess then threw herself into the contest with such effect, that the whole matter was referred to the King in Council, who ordered that for reasons of State all actions at law should cease, and that all the documents connected therewith should be impounded and delivered up to the Council.

Now what was the talisman by which the Dowager Countess, victorious as we have seen over her late husband in the matter of the poison, triumphed over the son in the matter of his legitimacy? Most probably she had so far mastered her late husband's private papers as to be in possession of some State secret which she held over the head of the timid, irresolute King. Whether this secret had anything to do with the relations between Elizabeth and Leicester may be subject for conjecture, but is hardly likely ever to be satisfactorily determined. James made sad havoc among the records of his predecessor's reign, and much that might have cast a light upon these mysterious proceedings has doubtless perished.

Sir Robert Dudley was so disgusted with the treatment he received that he went abroad, first obtaining a license from the King to travel, for it seems that even as recently as the days of the Stuarts, landowners were not allowed to become absentees at discretion. With his father's facility in affairs of the heart, Sir Robert left his wife at home, while the scandal of the period had it, that he was followed by a beautiful lady of high degree, who for his

sake sacrificed fortune and reputation, and assumed in Byronic fashion the disguise of a humble page. To the Court of Milan proceeded our hero, where he was welcomed by the reigning Duke as one of the most accomplished courtiers of the day. A romantic friendship sprang up between Sir Robert and the Grand Duke, and from that time forth our knight returned no more to England, but lived out his life abroad, and was made a Duke by the Emperor Ferdinand, in virtue of his personal merits and high lineage.

About a year after Sir Robert's departure, he was called upon by the King to return, and failing to obey, under an old Act of Parliament "against fugitives," all his landed possessions were forfeited to the Crown. And Kenilworth then became the residence of Prince Henry, the eldest son of King James, a youth of much promise, whose prolonged life and accession to the throne might have made a wonderful difference in the current of English history. The Prince, however, thinking Sir Robert hardly dealt with, proposed to pay a certain sum of money to extinguish any equitable rights of his in the domain, but the Prince died before the transaction was completed.

As for the Lady Alice, she seems to have dwelt contentedly at her father's house at Stoneleigh, assuming the title of Duchess on the strength of her husband's German title, and dying at ninety years of age, after a life more tranquil and happy than she could have hoped for with any of the fated house of Dudley.

Kenilworth suffered most probably by the change of masters, for during the Civil Wars, being Crown property, it was seized by the Parliament and granted out in portions to certain deserving officers, who made the most of their opportunities, and stripping away roofs, lead, timber, and every fitting that could be disposed of, left the fine old building the ruin we see it now.

From Kenilworth we strike the rich, luxuriant valley of the Avon at Stoneleigh Abbey, still the seat of descendants of the London Alderman of the sixteenth century. Of the old Cistercian abbey there are some remains in the existing mansion house. But the history of its present possessors is perhaps more interesting than the uneventful chronicles of a quiet religious house of no great importance. In modern days—say thirty or forty years ago—Stoneleigh Abbey was the subject of a good deal of interest among that numerous class of people who imagine they possess

some dormant claim to a goodly heritage. Terrible tales were told of a former Lord who had ruthlessly suppressed all evidence of an adverse character to his rights of possession, a newly-built bridge over the Avon playing an important part in the drama, certain compromising documents or inconvenient witnesses—popular opinion favoured the latter version—having been built into the foundations.

The real grounds for all this excitement were of the least substantial nature. Certainly, towards the close of the eighteenth century, the main line of Leighs became extinct. The barony was a creation of Charles the First, in gratitude for the hospitality he received at Stoneleigh when repulsed from the walls of Coventry, and the last Lord became insane for some time before his death; and possibly enough, had not his will been found purporting to have been made before the date of his insanity, the estate might have been fought for by contending claimants. However, the will was established, and by its provisions the estate passed to an only sister who died unmarried and left the estate to a Rev. Thomas Leigh of Addlestep, a descendant of the original London Alderman. At his death the estate passed by will again to a nephew, the ancestor of the present proprietor. But all this intricate succession had been canvassed by the popular voice. There is a strong popular belief in the rightful heir, and the ordinary laws of entail are mere straws in the way of bonds compared with the restrictions that a legislature of expectant heirs would impose. And certain persons who believed themselves nearer in blood to the old Lord than the inheritors of the estate, took action in a violent manner. There was some attempt to take forcible possession on the part of the claimants. Subscriptions were raised, and a kind of partisan warfare was threatened. But by degrees the excitement abated, and this quiet, fertile nook in a bend of the river Avon resumed its normal condition of dignified repose.

Lower down the stream Blacklow Hill appears rising beyond the highway at a short distance from the river, a hill, not remarkable in itself, but for a detached episode in English history of which it was the scene. As a tablet records, or did record at one time, here on the top of this hill Piers Gaveston was executed by a sort of lynching process in which the chief barons of England were concerned. And,

not far off, the heights break off in a series of red sandstone cliffs pierced with a number of ancient caverns, one of which has been known time out of mind as the hermitage of the famous Guy of Warwick, whose legendary history is told at some length, and in all good faith, by Sir William Dugdale, the historian of Warwickshire and editor of the *Monasticon*—a man of no inconsiderable historical acumen.

It was in the days of King Athelstan that the Danes invaded England and cruelly wasted the country as far as Winchester, where the King and his nobles had assembled. The victorious Danes offered the Saxon monarch a choice of three courses: That he should resign his crown to a Danish chief, or submit and pay tribute, or that the claims of the two races to dominion should be decisively settled in single combat. Athelstan chose the last as the most hopeful alternative, but looked for a champion in vain, for the Danes had already chosen their champion, the terrible Colebrand. It happened that the best of the Saxon knights were absent from the kingdom, and among these the bravest of all, Guy, who had married the beautiful Lady Felicia, acquiring vast wealth and the Earldom of Warwick, but who had abandoned love, and wealth, and honour for the welfare of his soul, and was now supposed to be on pilgrimage in the Holy Land.

The eve of the combat had now arrived, and the King was in despair, as no worthy champion could be found, although the whole county of Hants had been offered as a reward. And then at night—it was the vigil of St. John—a heavenly visitant appeared to the King, and bade him go at dawn to the north gate of the city, and there abide till the hour of prime, when he should see a company of palmers enter the city, among whom would be seen a dignified man in coarse pilgrim's dress, barefooted, and with head uncovered, but wearing a chaplet of roses, and he should be the English champion.

As the vision foreshadowed, so everything happened. The pilgrim appeared crowned with roses, but pale and emaciated with hardships and sufferings. How should he, a poor, worn-out pilgrim, fight the great Danish warrior? The King knew not, but thus it had been commanded from on high. Then the pilgrim reluctantly consented to meet the Danish knight, and presently appeared on the field of battle, mounted upon the King's best courser, "girt with the sword of Constan-

time the Great and with St. Maurice, his lance in his hand." On the other side appeared the gigantic Colebrand, with a whole cartload of arms, huge battle-axes, and enormous clubs. The fight began, and lasted for many hours without either gaining an advantage. At last Colebrand dropped his club, and reaching for it, left his arm ungarded for a moment, when the English champion sheared it off with a stroke of the sword of Constantine. Yet still Colebrand fought on with the remaining arm, and it was not till daylight began to fail, that the Dane succumbed to loss of blood, when King Athelstan's champion cut off his head, and a great shout of triumph was raised by the English.

The palmer refused all the rewards that would have been showered upon him. Nothing could tempt him to lay aside his pilgrim's habit, and only to the King's own ear, and under promise of secrecy, would he reveal the secret of his identity. To the King the palmer whispered that he was indeed the missing Guy of Warwick, but now bound by solemn vows to his life's end. And so they parted with tears, while Guy set his face towards his home in Warwick. And there, when he arrived, he made himself known to none, but attended alone at the castle-gate, and took alms at the hands of his own dear lady as one of the thirteen poor people to whom she daily gave relief, for her husband's safety and for the health of both their souls. But the rest of his time Guy passed at the hermitage in holy converse with the hermit there, upon whose death Guy himself assumed the hermit's frock, and lived in his cave with all due austerity. At last, feeling death approaching, he sent by a trusty hand to his dear and still expectant wife, the wedding-ring by which they were married, which brought the lady full of wonder and sorrow to the hermit's cell, but only to find her husband's corpse, sad and majestic, stretched before the altar, with the mystic chaplet about the brows, and a long white beard half covering his chest. And the Lady Felicia did not long survive this mournful meeting, but died, indeed, in a few days' time, so that the two were buried in one grave.

THE MARY LILIES.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IV.

IT was true. The doctor said that the powerful scent in the close air had poisoned the sleeping child, wearied out by his day's

pleasure, and already weakened as he was by the confined life and want of fresh air in his town home. If he had been a stronger child, such a thing might not have happened. For the next two days, Estelle did not leave the side of the bed upon which they had placed the boy.

She neither ate nor slept—scarcely even spoke. Madame would come in, her face swollen and flushed with crying, half-a-dozen times in the day, to see her and take another look at the child who had grown as dear to her as one of her own might have been. She tried to induce the girl to break the terrible watch she kept over the dead child. But it was useless.

"There is a tragedy there, *voyez-vous*," she said to the kind-hearted doctor, who came again to see the Englishwoman. "That child was more to her than were most people's. She has a story to her life, but I would not ask. She came just six months ago—one bitter day. She was shivering, but only thought of protecting the boy. She has lived here ever since, working as only the poorest work. She said her name was Estelle—she called it Esther—or something. English, *voyez-vous*, but I could not remember, so I called her Estelle. She gave no other name, and she flushed scarlet as a poppy when she said it. It was droll having no surname, but I would not ask. She has never had a letter nor a friend to see her. She knows no one in Paris but the little one;" and Madame melted into tears again.

Upstairs, the woman, whose last earthly tie seemed to have snapped with the child's life, sat white and tearless by the bed.

They took him away from her after those two days. She came back quite late in the evening of the day of the funeral. Madame left her by the tiny grave in the morning, and she supposed she had been there ever since. But she asked no questions and let her go up to her room, on her return, undisturbed.

For a second or two Estelle stood in the doorway, as if trying to remember something she wished to do. Then she went over to the old chest of drawers.

"I had better let him know that he can do nothing now," she said to herself. She opened one of the drawers. In it lay the few little garments belonging to the child. On the top of them lay the pinafore and the tiny slippers they had taken off him that morning. She took them out and turned them over slowly in her hand. But her eyes were perfectly dry. She had

never once cried since the child died. She put them back. "It was not that I wanted," she said.

Then she opened another and found a writing-desk. She took out from it a letter. It was in English, written in a bold, man's hand, dated a year back.

"MY DEAR ESTHER,—Do not let this letter distress you. I know now that what you told me the day I left you in Paris was perfectly true—that I could never win your love. I would not have spoken that day, only you seemed to be quite alone, and I wished you to know that I was always your friend. But I will not trouble you again. I am going abroad, and shall be out of England for some years, and as I shall be always travelling about, I am going to give you the address of my lawyers in London. Do not be angry. You refused my help, dear, for yourself—but the boy. One day you might, for some reason, be glad of what I have done. I have left a certain sum in their hands. You know I am rich. It is no longer mine, and you must not be angry at my giving it over for the use of your boy. Write to me now and then, and my lawyers will forward the letters. Now, dear, good-bye for a long time. God bless you and your boy.—Yours, DONALD HUNTLEY."

She read it through once or twice before quite understanding that it was the letter for which she had been searching. Then she sat down and wrote two or three lines to Mr. Donald Huntley. She said nothing of herself, only that the child was dead. She sealed it, and addressed it to his lawyers in London. Then she sat still, and went over some of the events that had happened to her since that letter had reached her. This friend had brought her to Paris, a year ago, at her request. Then leaving her in some rooms, he had gone into Brittany upon that quest of hers, to see if he could not right the terrible wrong done to her. He had failed. Then he had gone away, leaving her in Paris. He had wished to make sure of her future, but she had refused, saying that she and her boy would have enough to live quietly here, hidden from the eyes of the world. It was a pittance, smaller even than he suspected, but she would have made it suffice. Only two months after he left her, a man in England who held the money in trust for her failed, and she was left penniless.

After that she scarcely knew how she lived.

Yet she would not claim Donald Huntley's help.

Ah, had she done right? Ought not she to have accepted his gift? Was it her own wicked, foolish pride? Or was it the remembrance of the old jealousy that had once existed between this man and the one who had so shamefully betrayed her? That other—her husband—had deserted her, left her and her child to die of want; yet still in the eye of Heaven she was his wife. Was she then to live at the expense of another man—the man who had been her lover before she married Armand de Vismes—who had shown, after her desertion, that he was still her lover?

No, no! She would not. And then the child died, while his father was close by in Paris!

A shuddering cry broke from her, and she hid her face in her hands.

Nearly three years ago she had married Armand de Vismes.

She was an orphan, living in Guernsey with an old maiden-aunt, a great invalid, her last relation in the world. They lived a very retired life out in the country, making very few friends because of the aunt's delicate health.

Then one day, into the quiet, passionless life, spent almost wholly in attendance on her sick aunt, came Armand de Vismes. She had no one to advise her except Donald Huntley, who was a rejected lover, to whom Armand de Vismes, in the passion and jealousy of his love, showed a strange dislike. And Estelle loved, too, with a love in which entered no fear, nor doubt, nor suspicion.

They were married. Soon after the aunt died, and Estelle had no one left but her husband. The first part of their married life, spent in wandering about England, was perfect in its happiness. If Armand de Vismes had doubts about his parents' views on his marriage, he did not tell Estelle. But knowing the power the French law gives parents over their sons' freedom of action, he felt at times troubled and uneasy. But they did not interfere, and, as time went on, he began to hope that they were satisfied. They had long ago yielded to his fancies, which had led him to prefer a Bohemian artistic life to the comfort and luxury of his own home.

Then one day, when Basil was nearly a year old, he received a summons to return immediately to France. His eldest brother was dead. At the same time, his

parents declared his marriage illegal, undertaken as it had been without their consent. The news fell like a thunderbolt upon Estelle. The young man comforted her as well as he could, swearing that nothing would ever make him submit to the wickedness and injustice of these proceedings, saying that he would give up country, home, family, everything for her, his wife, and her love. He went over to France, promising to return directly the funeral was over.

He never came back. Neither did his wife hear from him. Only three days after his departure, came a note from Madame de Vismes, saying that he fully concurred in their decision, and begged that from henceforth no communication should pass between them. The suddenness and the terror of the shock almost sent her mad. Then it was that Donald Huntley, who happened to have just returned to England, having been travelling abroad since her marriage, came to her aid. He took her away, out from the little seaside place at which she and her husband were staying when he was so suddenly recalled to France. After a week or two had gone by, in which she never received a single answer to any of her letters, she made Donald Huntley take her to Paris, to make one last effort to see her husband. But when they reached London the strain of pain and suspense proved too much at last. She became so ill that he could only put her into apartments and wait till she was well enough to go on. She was unable to move for three weeks, and all the time, though he wrote to Armand de Vismes, and told him of his wife's illness, there came no word in reply.

When at last they arrived in Paris, he went down alone into Brittany, to the country seat of the De Vismes. The place was shut up. The housekeeper in charge, as well as the other servants whom he managed to see, would give him no information. They had evidently been put on their guard. But in the village, situated a little way from the beautiful château and grounds, he heard that the young monsieur had met with a very serious carriage accident, on the day he had arrived from England to attend his brother's funeral. He had been stunned, and was ill for a week or two after that, and that when he was better, monsieur and madame, and he with them, had left the country for America, where they had a great deal of property. They

were to be away for some time. Donald Huntley could find out nothing more. He returned to Paris with the conviction that the terrible wrong done to the woman he had loved so faithfully was not to be righted. It was then, in his devotion and his pity, he offered his love once more, and Estelle's answer had caused that letter to be written which she had just read.

CHAPTER V.

ESTELLE went out early the next morning to post her letter. Then she went on in the direction of the cemetery. As she was walking through the streets, looking neither right nor left, with the same blank, strange look in her eyes which had been there ever since the child died, a carriage, bringing a lady from one of the early services, rolled past. The lady in the brougham caught sight of her, and an exclamation broke from her lips as she saw the girl's face. She hastily pulled the check-string, and before the carriage could stop she had opened the door.

"Drive home!" she said imperatively to the coachman as he pulled up, and then alighting, hurried after Estelle.

The latter, unconscious of anything going on round her, was suddenly roused by a touch on her arm.

She turned and faced Madame de Vismes. For a second the two women looked at each other, the elder not knowing how to begin, while her face had grown almost as white as the other's.

Then Estelle, with a gesture of intense scorn and loathing, drew back from her. The movement gave the other courage. She drew herself up slightly.

"I did not wish to be impertinent," she said, as if speaking to a perfect stranger, though her voice was not as clear as usual. "I saw you the other day, in the garden with your boy. He looked delicate, and I——"

Estelle gazed at her with such unutterable amazement mingled with her contempt, that Madame de Vismes stopped.

"And you are pretending not to know me," Estelle said, when at last her lips could speak. "As if he did not tell you that I was his wife—that, his child. Do you think that I, who have been so terribly fooled, can be played with any more?"

Madame de Vismes's face flushed scarlet, as if she had been struck a blow across it, but with a violent effort she conquered herself and answered quietly, even coldly:

"You make a mistake; you are not his wife. He married without our consent, and the law of France allows of no such marriages. I am sorry for you."

"I am his wife. He married me in England, and in the sight of Heaven I am his wife."

Madame de Vismes made a slight gesture of disdain. She seemed to have recovered her self-possession, but her face was still quite pale.

"He apparently thought otherwise."

"It is a lie—a terrible, wicked lie! He loved me till you came in between us, and if I could see him——"

"This is folly. He—well, he agrees with me. But I am sorry you have suffered, and through us. I would do what I can to compensate you—you and the child. You are poor, and I should like to make some arrangement for you both. In your own country——"

Estelle flung out her hands towards her, then broke into a laugh that made Madame de Vismes recoil in dismay.

"You would help the child now. It is good of you, very good—only he is dead!"

"Dead! Great Heavens!"

"Dead! Yea. They said, of the scent of the lilies. But it was not. It was of want and weariness, of the burden of evil and treachery you and your son cast on his life."

Then she turned and hurried down the street.

Madame de Vismes stood gazing after her.

"She is mad!" her white lips said after a second. "She is mad! But death! Oh, Heaven, that it should have come to this! Was not my self-humiliation enough punishment?"

The interview saved Estelle's reason. As she reached her child's grave a great revulsion of feeling set in. The limits of bitterness had been reached. She broke into a passion of weeping, and the mother's sorrow for her dead child left no more place for hardness, nor anger, nor bitter scorn. She forgot everything save that her child, her darling, had left her, and she was alone.

CHAPTER VI.

THE short winter's day had come to an end, and the darkness brought with it a sense of relief, shutting out as it did the dreary heath-lands, over which the wind swept with wild sobbing moans, the soaking

woods, in which the constant drip of the rain from the trees overhead sounded like ghostly footsteps in the deserted pathways; shrouding the great piles of white stone scattered over the country, looking like nothing so much as huge tombstones set up over some dead giant, while the rows of sombre yews, planted along the edges of ditches, added to the weird fancy. Under the winter sky and dismal, falling rain, the country lying round the Château de Vismes looked like a cemetery of old dead and gone giants.

Inside the château it was scarcely more pleasant. The wind howled round the house, shaking the windows and trying to force an entrance; and the rain, as it fell with sullen splash upon the stone terraces outside, made it seem as if the ghostly footsteps had left the wood, and were stealthily creeping round, only waiting for the wind to have forced the barriers of windows and doors, to enter behind it, in order to haunt and terrify in that side room upstairs. For there Madame de Vismes lay very ill—dying, the doctors feared. She had been ailing for a long time—for more than a year now, ever since the summer when she had been brought face to face with her son's English wife. The doctors could give no decided reason for her illness. She had grown nervous and irritable. When away from home—and they travelled a little, to see if change of air would do her good—she seemed better. But after their return, this winter, to their country house in Brittany, she had become worse. She caught cold, and the cold brought on an illness in which she became delirious.

She raved of nothing but white lilies, and a dead child, and a woman's eyes which looked out at her from the darkness, and drove her mad with their bitterness and reproach. For weeks she lay ill, then slowly her reason came back to her. She was sitting in her room to-night, still too weak to go downstairs.

Her face was turned towards the door, a faint spot of colour in her cheeks, her eyes gleaming with intense excitement, listening for every sound.

Downstairs, Armand de Vismes sat in the library, listening too.

A fortnight ago he had heard a story that had made him rise up from his mother's bedside, where he had heard it, and swear with white lips and terrible eyes that he would never once more come into her presence till his wife stood by his side.

A story of such treachery and evil that his brain refused at first to understand it.

He had heard that his wife Esther—his love—was not false, that she had not refused to come to him, or to write to him any letter save that one in which she told him that she thought his marriage was a mistake, and that she was afraid of the poverty that would come if his parents did as they had threatened—stop his allowance, and leave him penniless. That letter had been a base forgery. Had not his heart told him so at the time? Yet, fool as he was, he would not believe it.

He learned that his father and mother had never written to her to tell her of his own accident and the illness that followed; that they had seized the opportunity of breaking up the marriage they despised; that they had played upon the weak part of his nature—his pride and his jealousy. They had kept back her letters, and those he had tried to write to her as he grew better. All that they had told him about the enquiries made in England had been false. It was very true that Donald Huntley had come down to the seaside place where he left her, and that they had gone away together, but they had only invented the evil of it—or rather, allowed his own tortured brain and heart to weave the tissue of doubt and falsehood for themselves. Before accompanying his people to America, glad of the chance of putting an ocean between himself and his false love, he had gone over to England to make enquiries for himself. But the delay had been so long, that he discovered nothing to throw light upon the terrible darkness that had fallen upon his life.

The landlord of the little cottage he had rented told him that she had gone away suddenly; that Mr. Huntley had been staying in the village, and had been a great deal with her; that she looked very ill and anxious before she left. The landlord had heard that she was going to join him (her husband) on the Continent. Armand heard nothing more. He made his enquiries with caution, for he discovered that in that simple country place no one suspected her of evil, and—bitterly as she had betrayed him—he would not be the first to cast the stone.

From that time till the day he saw her among the lilies they had never crossed each other's paths.

And it had all been a lie! A lie that had lasted more than three years; a lie that had had its beginning in a small

moment of temptation coming to his parents, who hated the unknown wife—who, they thought, had marred their son's fortunes—as he himself lay senseless and powerless. The keeping back the knowledge of his accident had spread from the small act of concealment to a vast tissue of falsehood.

No wonder his mother had failed beneath its burden. No wonder she raved of dead children and terrible-eyed women.

His father had died in America—suddenly, with the falsehood still on his life. His mother had lived to make restitution. Restitution!

Could she? To-night he was waiting to see.

The child was dead. The——

He had been searching for her everywhere during the last fortnight. And the day before, by the merest accident, he had found her in Paris. Wandering about one of its poorest quarters, he had seen her coming out of one of the houses, accompanied by a woman of the lower class. It was madame.

From her—his courage failed him, and he could not address his wife there out in the street; he waited till she parted from the woman—he heard her story: how she had lived in madame's house; how her child died there; and how there, too, she had come into a fortune.

He heard, too—for madame could not say enough of her goodness and gentleness—how she never forgot her old friends, and had helped madame and her husband so handsomely that now they no longer lived in that poor street—only that day she and the English lady had gone back just to look at the little room in which her child had lived.

Madame gave him her address. He wrote to her, feeling that he could not meet her face to face until she knew the whole story. He could not tell it to her, and he asked her to meet him in his own home in Brittany in the presence of his mother, who was dying, and could not get the recollection of the child who had died, out of her brain.

One short line had come in answer.

"I will come."

Nothing more. Whether she were coming in anger, in scorn, in forgiveness, he did not know. It was time she had arrived. He had not gone to meet her. He felt that he could not see her first with other eyes looking on. He paced up and down the library, unable to rest, till, weary

with the fatigue and suspense of the last two weeks, his limbs failed him, and he flung himself down into a chair, folding his arms on the table with his head bowed upon them.

That was how she saw him first.

The carriage drove up to the door, but in the tempest of wind and rain raging round the château, he did not hear the sound of its wheels.

One of the servants brought her to the library as their master had ordered. At the door she dismissed him, and gently opened it.

He did not hear her, and she stood watching him. Had there been any anger left in her heart? Had there been still any bitter resentment at his believing so infamous a lie? Had there been no passion of wounded pride, no shame of outraged womanly dignity? Was there no white face of a dead child—his and hers—rising up between them?

If there had been, the sight of his attitude, so weary and hopeless, woke into passionate life the great love that desertion and silence had only forced into stillness. It was not dead, its life had only been stunned. He was her husband—her love!

She went quickly across the room to him.

He raised his head and saw her, but he made no attempt to go to her.

He stood up and waited, while his heart could give his lips no word to say.

"My husband," she said very gently as she held out her hands to him, "have you nothing to say to me after these long years?"

"Esther, you have come with mercy?" His voice came at last, hard and strained from his pale lips.

"With mercy! I have come with love."

Then he knew he was forgiven. With a sound like a sob in his throat, he drew her close to his heart, while the lips that had spoken such bitter words of pain, and doubt, and shame, met and were purified in one long kiss.

Outside, the wind sobbed and moaned over the bleak heath-lands and desolate, dripping woods. Inside the house there was peace.

There were other children there in after days, but the little one who had died was never forgotten, and the children, as they gathered the white Mary Lilies in their garden, would hush their voices and

laughter, and whisper to each other that they were the flowers of the great white angel who had come one day to take their brother away.

A DAY WITH GEORDIE.

To a south-countryman, and especially to a Londoner, the change of scene and life presented after a leap of three hundred miles in a line due north is so striking that he may be almost pardoned for a temporary doubt if he be in one and the same land. We may be accustomed to the gloom and the fogs of our metropolis, and we may vaunt that nothing can beat them, but in Geordie's country—that is to say, the great coal country of North Britain—we find ourselves lost in a griminess and a gloom of equal intensity but of a totally distinct genus. We may be familiar with the bewildering twists and turns of the Kentish or the Cornish dialect, and we may doubt if our native language can be elsewhere so mangled out of recognition, but the vilest French patois is intelligible compared with the tongue spoken by Geordie. As for manners and customs, superstitions and beliefs, prejudices and opinions—those of Geordie's country are as distinct from those of our country, as are the customs of the Choctaw Indians from those of the New Yorkers.

Long before we get into Geordie's country we are prepared for it. Grimy towns, grimy footpaths, grimy individuals, are apparent miles away from the nearest pit; the trains we pass are mineral trains; the talk is of ships, and outputs, and coal prices; the fields get more and more sickly in colour, the trees are more stunted, the very sky seems to reflect the hue of the gigantic wealth of the earth. We gape at the first pit noticeable, and marvel at its huge "slag banks," its ever turning wheels, its ever vomiting chimneys; then another and another are passed, and by the time we pull up at the Durham station, and gaze far beyond the majestic towers and battlements of Cuthbert's cathedral and Norman William's castle into a dim region of half-night, they are as familiar objects to us as the farmhouses of our south-country roads.

Before we penetrate to Geordie's working sphere, let us look at Geordie himself, for he is a creation per se and well worthy of study.

The popular portrait of Geordie gives

us a big, stalwart fellow, begrimed with dirt from morn to night, only a step removed from the animals as to his tastes and ideas, very drunken and very brutal, working like a galley-slave when he does work, and spending his earnings with reckless prodigality.

There is truth in this, of course—a little more truth than there is in the popular idea of the British sailor who is always dancing hornpipes clad in a straw hat and white trousers, drinking grog, singing Dibdin's songs, and shivering his timbers—but not very much more. The picture may pass very well for the Geordie of half a century since, but the Geordie of to-day is as different as is Ironclad Jack of to-day from Wooden-Wall Jack of Nelson's era.

In nine cases out of ten Geordie is a small man. The first Geordies may have been typical northern giants, but the work of generations in a bad atmosphere, in a cramped position, has written its tale in the physique of the modern Geordie. He very rarely attains a height over five feet six inches, and although his "upper works" are well developed, and although he has not an ounce of superfluous flesh upon his iron muscles, his legs are small and shapeless; and, when washed and dressed in above-ground clothes, he has the appearance of a man whose life is sedentary in the extreme.

Geordie is certainly a grimy being during business hours—that is to say, during eight hours of five days of the week, but his very first move upon his arrival at home in the "row" is to the washing-tub, and, just as he is a peculiar individual generally speaking, so is his washing method peculiar. Face, neck, front of body, arms, and legs, are scraped as clean as soap-and-water and brush can make them, but upon no account does he touch his back or under his arms, as a firm belief still obtains that weakness is the sure result of so doing. Similarly, Geordie's notion of the attitude of repose is peculiar, as one may see when passing through a colliery row on a Sunday. Chairs are prominent articles of furniture in his cottage, but he only uses them at meal-times or upon state occasions. When he smokes his pipe of peace, or indulges in a gossip, he squats on his heels, not in the Japanese fashion, but with his knees under his chin, and in this, to us, painful attitude he can remain for an hour without stirring; the spectacle of a row of men, with unnaturally pallid faces, thus squatting, being laughable in the extreme.

A colliery row is as entirely distinct in appearance and constitution from any other collection of cottages, as is a Belgravian terrace from a suburban villa road, and the visitor is at once impressed with the fact that he is amongst a peculiar people. If he enters one cottage, he sees an exact replica of every other pitman's cottage in the neighbourhood. The first object which meets the eye is the enormous bed; not a trumpery affair of cheap veneer made only to be looked at, but a well-built, solid four-poster bed, amply provided with curtains and pillows and coverings, and, of course, with the inevitable antimacassar. In front of the bed are invariably stationed, like sentinels, two or three wooden chairs, each with its proper antimacassar. Upon one side stands a sort of chiffonier, decorated with bits of china, shells, and other knick-knacks arranged with mathematical precision; upon the other is the table, the bath, and the cooking-range.

Of course there are rows and rows, according to the interest which the pit-owner takes in those who work for him, and of course one meets with different degrees of neatness and space; but no matter how filthy and uncanny the surroundings, the big bed and the sentinel chairs are to be found.

The Geordie who has not children, dogs, or flowers is a remarkable exception to the general rule. In fact, the order of precedence of the average Geordie's household gods may be stated thus: Firstly, the good woman; secondly, the bed and the bath; thirdly, the dogs or flowers; and fourthly, the bairns. Hence it is seen that Geordie's tastes are various. If he is botanical he does not care what sum he gives for a peculiarly gaudy flower. He has an eye for art, as we may see by the papering of his walls with coloured prints and tradesmen's almanacks, and by the fact that his door-posts are often of one vivid colour, whilst his scraper—Geordie always has a scraper—is of another. He is an enthusiastic patron of certain branches of sport, for, besides being especially knowing in all matters canine, he never hesitates to give up a day's work in order to attend a boat-race, or a coursing match, or a game of bowls. He used to be fond of pugilism and wrestling, but of late years his allegiance has been transferred elsewhere, although more "foights" take place in the coal country in a week than occur down south in a year.

Geordie lives well. He would laugh to

scorn the south-country yokel's daily dinner of bacon and beans, or the still more moderate diet of the northern rustic. He likes the best of everything, and plenty of it, consuming game largely when in season, and having a known partiality for pine-apples, whilst beef and mutton and pork are looked upon as necessities of life. Holiday attire, from his point of view, means the display of as much colour as possible, and Geordie's wife, decked out with a brilliant shawl and a gown of startling brilliancy, is a sight to be seen and shuddered at.

Still, Geordie's life is a hard one, and it requires a good deal of high living and a great many holidays to make up for that eight hours' spell of his in the bowels of the earth.

Let us follow him as he goes to relieve the night-shift, let us say at the Wear-mouth Pit, the deepest but one in England, situated in the very heart of the town of Sunderland, clad in his coarse jacket, his knee-breeches allowing a bit of blue-clad leg to appear above the thick shoes, his pick in one hand, his lamp in the other, and the pipe, which he will have to give up at the colliery gates, clenched lovingly between his teeth.

We can see, by the constant movement of the two huge aerial wheels, that work never ceases here, and whilst Geordie is crossing the labyrinth of railway lines, and dodging between trucks empty and trucks laden, we ourselves must undergo some personal transformation ere we are ready to accompany him. So, in the house of the courteous manager, we are invested with coarse serge knickerbocker suits, with leathern caps, the peaks of which are worn behind, on our heads, and stout sticks in our hands, whilst the ladies of our party, who have come prepared for the dirty ordeal, exchange their hats and bonnets for woollen shawls.

We follow the "viewers," who act as our guides, across the maze of lines, past the huge slag bank, up two or three flights of grimy steps to the room wherein all the lamps are cleaned, filled, and kept in order; we receive each a lamp, and pass into a huge timber hall, around which are squatting perhaps a hundred pitmen, waiting until the last of the night-shift have been brought up.

In the centre of the hall is the pit mouth, that is to say, the "downcast shaft," as distinguished from the "upcast shaft," which is used entirely for venti-

lating purposes, and every few minutes four cages arrive at the summit, in two of which is the fresh-hewn coal, and in the other two the night-shift men, huddled together, and looking inexpressibly weird as they emerge into daylight.

The trucks in which they sit are not tempting-looking conveyances, and our ladies look rather aghast at them, but we are assured that our descent shall be made in a special manner. So, when the last of the night-shift have "come to bank," a square box, lined with straw, is rolled along the lines, and we are invited to enter. This box, our guide informs us, is called the Sunbeam, because it was made expressly for Lady Brassey.

We settle ourselves as best we can in the necessarily limited space, are warned to duck our heads well down, and are rolled over the mouth of the yawning abyss eighteen hundred feet beneath us. We are then lifted a bit, so as to allow two empties to be put under us, then lowered to allow two other trucks of Geordies to be put over us, and finally descend. Luckily for our nerves, we can see nothing of the pace at which we are going, although about half-way down it makes itself felt by a deafening sensation in the ears, but in exactly two minutes we reach the bottom of the shaft.

We are amazed to find ourselves in a wide, lofty tunnel, white-painted, and brilliantly lighted, with horses and men moving about just as in the streets eighteen hundred feet above our heads. To recover our sense of hearing we adjourn to a small office for a few minutes, and then start for a two-mile ride on what we call a tram-truck, moved on the endless chain principle by a powerful engine. Gradually the tunnel decreases in height and width, until we are obliged to keep our heads well down in order to avoid contact with the huge transverse baulks of timber which support the roof. We note, too, that we are moving through a passage cut in the virgin coal, and when we alight we are fairly amongst the deepest and latest workings of the mine. We strike off from the main truck way, and at once begin the rough portion of our exploration, sometimes moving along for many yards in a crouching position, and even then receiving occasionally brisk smacks on our leathern caps, in other places able to walk upright. The silence is so profound that we can literally hear our hearts beat when we

seat ourselves for a few minutes' rest. The coarse flannel shirts make us perspire profusely, although a current of air is felt wherever we go, and the foothold is of the roughest nature. At intervals along the way are spaces cut out of the walls, wherein we stop whilst the train of coal-laden trucks, called "tubs," drawn by ponies, rumble past; and one of the features of this underground locomotion is the marvellous adroitness with which the drivers in charge leap on and off the double connecting chain between the pony and the first "tub" when in full motion.

As yet we have not seen Geordie at work, but a distant, dull, regular sound proclaims the vicinity of a working corner long before we reach it. As there are ladies in our party, one of our guides deems it necessary to go forward and herald the approach of visitors, so that by the time we arrive Geordie has had time to clothe himself rather more than is usual with him while at work.

There are four men working in this corner; two of them are squatting and hewing at the black glistening wall; the third is lying on his back and working at the mass overhead in a passage too narrow to admit of his standing or squatting; whilst the fourth empties the coal into the truck.

Of course, by way of paying footing, each of us has a turn with the pick, and after a few blows, feel pretty much as if we had done a day's work. Then we distribute largesse, and proceed farther, to see the other great sights of the pits—the stables and the ventilating furnace.

The stable consists of a long, lofty gallery cut out of the rock, and in it are some fifty ponies, temporarily off duty. These ponies are brought down when quite foals, and as a rule never see daylight again. Our guide tells us that one pony, brought to bank after ten years' service in the pit, went mad from the sudden effects of brilliant sunshine, and points to another old veteran of fifteen years' service, "and," he adds, "as good as the day he was first brought."

From the stables we go to the furnace. On our way we pass a chasm in the walls, which we are told is the shaft by which we descended, and, as we have been gradually mounting since our departure from the tram-trucks, we shall see for ourselves the pace at which our cage descended. We wait for a minute; there is a dull sound as of rushing wind, a dense mass is

whisked past us, and we are informed that it is the cage going to the pit mouth.

The furnace is at the bottom of the up-cast shaft, and is so huge and fierce that at a distance of ten feet, we are glad to shade our faces with our hands. This heat causes a powerful draught, which is carried down the downcast shaft, through the whole of the workings, and back again up the upcast shaft. To test the force of this draught our guide requests us to open a door close by the furnace. We do manage the operation after much exertion, and are nearly bowled over by the gust with which we are assailed, much to the amusement of half-a-dozen Geordies, who respectfully request another footing payment for our experience.

And so we go on for an hour, up and down, now walking upright and easily, now crouching almost double, stumbling over masses of fallen rock, tripping up over the endless chain, our figures reflected by the light of our safety-lamps in gaunt, weird shadows on the walls of the gallery.

We are very hot and very thirsty, so that we are not sorry when we find ourselves at our starting-place, after having made a good round of the workings, having been under the river, and under the sea, and having penetrated landwards a couple of miles out of the town on the way to Ryhope.

When we arrive at the pit-office, and survey ourselves in the glass, we can appreciate the existence of the tub as a necessary condition of Geordie's life, for, although we have only been below ground two hours, the minute particles of coal-dust have penetrated to the smallest exposed spots on our heads and faces, have drawn black lines around our eyes, and filled our ears and noses.

And so, after a bath and a glass of sherry, and having expressed our appreciation of the extreme courtesy and attentions of the Wearmouth Pit officials, we sneak along by-ways and back streets towards home.

We had felt no nervousness during our expedition, probably, as Prior wrote, because—

From ignorance our comfort flows ;

but we were assured that in the pitman's work, as with earthquakes, familiarity with danger breeds anything but contempt, and we were very much struck when we asked an old Geordie whom we met in the workings, when he would be off duty, to hear him reply, "At eight o'clock, if I'm alive."

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XV. WINTER.

CAPTAIN NORTH'S disclosure had an effect upon Theo with which he ought to have been satisfied. His father had been dearer to her than her own, and was, indeed, the only person to whom she had given the whole love and reverence of her nature. She felt with Hugh, that there could be no forgiveness for the man who had been Uncle Henry's friend, whom he had trusted, who had cheated and betrayed him. She could not, it was plain, have anything to do with that man—or with his relations. She threw Gerald's rose into the fire that night, and sat looking, long after it had disappeared, at the red little cavern where it had been, till her eyes became dim, and she could not look any longer. Hugh and she did not mention the subject again ; it was too painful to them both ; but by her gentleness and sweetness the next day he understood that she meant to make a little amends for her obstinacy. It was only that, however. Hugh could not flatter himself that she had been glad to see him the day before, or that she cared at all to go back with him to London. He had known Theo too long to be deceived in her moods.

He was jealous and unhappy, though Theo did not trouble herself to know that. It was hard, he thought, that he should have found out in Scotland how much he cared for her, and should have come back to find that some new barrier had been set up between them. For, as he sat in the railway-carriage and looked at Theo, and she looked far beyond him, it made him sad to feel how little hope there was of his ever coming between Theo and her dreams. In the summer, he had thought that he might safely wait for a long time ; now he wondered how he could have made such a terrible mistake. He could not forget the look, the flush, with which Theo had spoken of Gerald Fane ; she had had no idea how much it told him. He certainly believed that what he had said about Litton had been a strong check, and that the affair would no doubt pass away in time ; but at present the pale face opposite, the quiet lips and thoughtful eyes, the slightly puzzled look that Theo always had when her mind was uneasy, told him plainly that he must wait ; if he could keep his old place with Theo, it was all that he must expect now.

He took her to Lady Redcliff's, and went off to his quarters with a heavy heart, all the heavier because the thing had been in part his own doing; he had himself suggested that Helen should ask her down there. He was very angry with himself, not with Theo; he could understand, he thought, how those scheming people had worked on her generous heart; she believed in them, as his father had once believed in Litton.

All his friends were quite aware of his low spirits, and thought he must have had very bad sport in Scotland. Hugh left them to imagine what they liked. He went on wondering how long he could be patient—how long he could keep this love silent, which grew stronger every day. He went constantly to see Theo, for it was impossible to keep away, though Lady Redcliff snubbed him as usual, and every sight of Theo left him more miserable, and more conscious how entirely all the feeling was on one side.

As for Lady Redcliff, she hardly knew what to make of her grand-daughter, now that she had her back again. Theo seemed in a great measure to have lost her old spirit—the Meynell temper was no longer so ready to flare up under sarcasm and provocation of all kinds. It did not at all please Lady Redcliff to find that her sharpest speeches were hardly heard, or answered with what she thought unnatural gentleness. At first she was angry, and hardly spoke at all for a day or two, perhaps with an idea of paying Theo off in her own coin; then, as this treatment had no effect on Theo, she became really anxious, and after much curious peering at the girl, burst out one day:

"Theo, you are in love—but not with your cousin, I'm glad to see."

It was just after one of Captain North's hopeless visits, and Lady Redcliff had noticed with satisfaction that Theo did not seem sorry when he went away.

Theo started violently. She was instantly on the defensive, and something of the old scornful look came into her eyes as she turned towards Lady Redcliff.

"No, grandmamma. What do you mean?" she said.

Lady Redcliff smiled maliciously, and went on looking at her in silence, till Theo changed colour, and turned to the window again.

"I'm glad you are awake," said Lady Redcliff. "I knew you would be bored with those Goodalls, but I hardly expected

that the life would be literally bored out of you. And is that poor wretch in love with you, may I ask? or what makes him so abominably dismal?"

"What poor wretch?" said Theo.

"Hugh North, of course," said Lady Redcliff, beating impatiently on the arm of her chair.

"In love with me? How you fancy things!" said Theo. "Hugh is just the same as ever. He is my brother, grandmamma; you never will understand."

"I don't think you are a humbug," said Lady Redcliff. "I believe you really are as blind as you seem to be. All I can say is, that a brother does not often look at his sister as that man looks at you—and I suspect it is you who won't understand."

Theo did not speak.

"Come, you are thinking of somebody else; who is it?" said Lady Redcliff. "You had better go back to Staffordshire to-morrow, for I see you have left your heart there. Who is it? Mr. Goodall's head-clerk?"

"Please don't tease me now, my head aches," said Theo gently; and she turned such a pale face to her grandmother, with such weary, sorrowful eyes, that Lady Redcliff had a pang of repentance.

"You look like a ghost; go to your room and lie down," she said. "But just remember that I am your best friend, and that your wisest plan would be to tell me all about it."

"I have nothing to tell you," said Theo as she left the room.

"It is the head-clerk, I verily believe," mused Lady Redcliff when she was gone. "But how am I to do anything if the girl won't tell me? Shall I ask that prig? He probably knows or suspects. No, I won't have him between me and Theo. What an idiot he is! If I was a young man, would I take so much snubbing!"

After this Theo had a great struggle with herself, and brightened up wonderfully. She was almost like her old self again; she went out riding with Hugh, and walking every day with her friend Wool. She talked to Hugh, just as she used to talk in the old days, about anything that came uppermost. Her cousin—most cautious of men—found great happiness in listening to every laugh, and in watching every sign of returning spirits. He began to feel that all would come right in the future, if only he had patience.

Lady Redcliff watched Theo's humour

too, but not with so much confidence, for she was a very clever old woman. Besides, she saw Theo at times when Hugh did not—in the long evenings, when she sat reading till her grandmother was ready to play cards. Those were the times for dreaming; and Lady Redcliff would start up suddenly from a prolonged inspection of Theo's face under the lamp, while she herself was supposed to be asleep after dinner, and the game that began after those wakeful fits of hers was pretty sure to end in a quarrel. Lady Redcliff would dash the cards across the table, and Theo would ring the bell sharply and walk scornfully out of the room. She was now quite equal to the old fights with her grandmother, and Lady Redcliff often saw that brown flame in her eyes, which she loved because it belonged to the Meynells.

In these days Theo thought it right to try and forget the existence of the Fanes altogether. Uncle Henry, the loved authority of her early life, now stood between her and them, and the thought of him was still, for Theo, to be regarded above all other thoughts. If she had known that before, she said to herself, she would never have attempted to make friends with them. But now the future was a little out of her own power. Any post might bring a letter from Ada, claiming the help she had offered; and then what was she to do? That question would press itself on her mind continually.

It was a cold winter, and all through January Theo hardly went out, for Lady Redcliff was ill, and could not bear to lose sight of her. It was a repetition of last winter, when she had been with Colonel North all through his illness. He certainly was a very different kind of patient, thinking of everything but himself, while this poor woman thought of nothing but herself. Still, she was more bearable in illness than in health, for she was cheerful, interested in her symptoms, and bore pain like the old heathen philosopher she was. She had every intention of getting better, and her funny old doctor, in whom she had more confidence than in any other living person, told Theo there was no cause for fear.

"Lady Redcliff won't die till she chooses," he said; and, as she looked at him, a little grave and surprised, he added: "Strength of mind has a great deal to do with it, and some people have kept themselves alive for years by resolution."

"It must be a great effort. I think I should be too lazy for it," said Theo.

"I'm afraid you would," said the old doctor. "Pity—it's better to be active and courageous, like your grandmother."

"Is it worth while?" said Theo, half to herself, as he left the room.

Hugh came often to see her in those dark afternoons. He was tender and kind, and Theo looked forward to seeing him with her old feeling of peaceful trust, wondering now and then how her grandmother could have misunderstood him so absurdly. This was just as Hugh wished, for he had resolved not to trouble her till Lady Redcliff was quite well again, and her mind was at rest.

At last, one mild afternoon in February, when Lady Redcliff was much better, and had been out for a drive, he called rather late, and asked Theo if she would let him take her to the Old Masters the next day. A picture of his was there—a Gainsborough portrait of an ancestress of his own and Theo's. It used to hang over the writing-table in his father's library, and had been a familiar friend to him and Theo from their childhood. Theo much wished to go and visit the picture in its crowded solitude at Burlington House; she made Hugh smile by saying that dear Mrs. Hildebrand, as they called her, must be so very dull there.

"I don't think so," he said. "She has plenty of friends in the same room."

Theo looked so happy and sweet, as she sat by the fire in the twilight and talked about Mrs. Hildebrand, that Hugh gazed at her with a mixture of intense joy and pain. There was no danger of her finding him out, for she was thinking of the great-great-aunt, who had been a celebrated beauty in her day, but who never, Hugh felt sure, could have had the lovely distinction of Theo.

"My darling!" he said to himself; "I can't bear it any longer. I shall ask her to-morrow, and I think she likes me enough—almost."

Theo little guessed what was in store for her, though Hugh's manner at parting was a shade more affectionate than usual.

"Then I may come to-morrow, dear?" he said, bending over her, and holding her hand for a moment.

"Yes, please do. I shall be so glad," said Theo.

CHAPTER XVI. A CRISIS.

MRS. HILDEBRAND NORTH, in one of the smaller rooms of the exhibition, looked very pretty, and piquante, and charming.

She no doubt thought it great fun, and quite like old times to shine thus in public; she was a person to whom a dark room with dull people in it must always have appeared detestable. She was now on the same wall with several portraits of her time, and no doubt they admired each other, gossiped about the last century, and laughed at this, when they were not occupied in exchanging glances with the varieties of people who came all day to look at them. Most of these modern stagers agreed that Mrs. North's portrait was the prettiest in the room, and her face seemed to show that she enjoyed even such barefaced flattery as this. Her dark eyes were smiling, her red lips were smiling, her hair was drawn up and dressed with strings of pearls; a narrow band of black velvet set off the slender whiteness of her throat; her gown was of cream-white brocade, covered with a fine little running pattern of red flowers and green leaves. Neither Hugh North nor his cousin Theo had any pretensions to be like this charming ancestress of theirs. They stood before her and looked up with smiling recognition, which Mrs. Hildebrand quite returned. The sight of them seemed to amuse her very much; she appeared to smile mischievously, and to fix her eyes upon them.

"How well she looks here!" said Theo.

"I used to like her better at home," said Hugh. "Suppose you sit down here and look at her for a few minutes. At the door just now, we passed a man I know, and I want to speak to him. Do you mind? I won't be five minutes."

"Oh no, be as long as you like," said Theo; "I shall be very happy here;" and she sat down opposite Mrs. Hildebrand.

People passed backwards and forwards between her and the picture, but she took no notice of them, though they often looked at her. She was thinking; for some unknown reason—perhaps because of a pale gleam of sunshine that crossed the floor—her thoughts had gone back to Helen's wedding. She seemed to be standing once more in the chancel, with a few people near her, looking at Helen, looking at John, and then—dear me! what dull, stupid things men and women are, to be sure—at least, when they marry and go on living like those two. Theo's eyes were bent down; all that scene passed before them, one thing, one person after another, just as they had come then. It was very strange, but presently the strangest thing of all

happened. She remembered to be angry with herself, and lifted up her eyes, breaking off the vision with a sigh. She looked up again towards the pictures, but did not see them, for there, between her and Mrs. Hildebrand, stood Gerald Fane.

At first she thought she was still dreaming, it was so wonderful to see him there, when a moment before they had both been standing in the chancel of Linwood church. Then he took off his hat, smiling, and she, becoming fully conscious, got up and shook hands with him.

"I did not see you come in. Did you see me?" she said. "How odd that we should meet here!"

"Perhaps it is," said Gerald. "I thought—I am only in London for two days, and I thought I should like to see these old pictures. I came in here a few minutes ago; you were sitting here. I saw you, and I hoped you would see me presently."

"I am very sorry; I am dreadfully absent," said Theo. "Do you see that portrait? Isn't she lovely! She is a Mrs. North, a very, very great aunt of mine. We came here on purpose to pay her a visit."

"You are not alone?" said Gerald, giving one glance to the portrait, and another round the room.

"I came with my cousin—with Captain North. He went away just now to talk to somebody."

Gerald's countenance fell. Ever since that day in the autumn, he had made up his mind that the man he disliked most, next to Warren, or perhaps equally with him, was this very Captain North. Besides other reasons, his rudeness to Clarence that day had never been explained. Clarence was not likely to explain it. If he had, Gerald's proud views of his duty would have been likely to agree with Theo's own.

As it was, she noticed the change in the young man's manner when she mentioned Hugh, and then she remembered the great obstacle, and wondered whether he knew of it too, and then with sure intuition told herself that he did not. He looked a little angry, a little gloomy, but his eyes and brow were as clear as her own; there was no shame there. It was impossible then to puzzle him with altered behaviour. Theo felt that she could not do that, and her manner was if anything a little gentler and more friendly as she asked about Ada.

"She is very well; she is at home," said Gerald. "It has been dull work for

her getting through the winter ; however, one comfort is that Warren is abroad, so—— But that won't interest you."

"Why do you say that ? It does interest me," said Theo.

"It is too good of you ever to think about her at all."

"You are morbid, I think. You don't like being in London," she said, looking at him with a very sweet smile in her eyes.

"I don't know," he said, and his eyes were bent on the floor.

"Let us sit down and talk a little," said Theo.

She was a very extraordinary young woman. She knew perfectly well that she was doing wrong, that for every possible reason she ought to have kept Gerald Fane at a distance, remembering vividly certain warnings she had had. But, in fact, self-consciousness was such a stranger to Theo, that even now, at this stage of their history, she thought of him a great deal more than of herself ; his troubles, which she knew or suspected, occupied her whole mind. It is no use trying to make excuses for her. Her best friends have always said that Theo was not quite like other people. And singularity has a way of bringing people to grief in this world.

At any rate, she was singular that day in ignoring all considerations, and doing what she chose. Gerald Fane did not exactly wonder at her, being unaware of any reason why she should not talk to him, but he thought her perfectly charming, was very much encouraged, gave himself up to the moment with a happy abandonment. They sat down and talked, not about Ada, for Theo saw that the subject made him sad, and, knowing as much as she did, she could not hint that she would like to know more.

Mrs. Hildebrand smiled down on them approvingly as they sat there, perfectly absorbed in each other. Captain North was not quite so much pleased. He was hurrying a little in his return, for his friend had kept him longer than he intended, and as he came through the door he had a full view of the two faces. It was such a shock to him that he paused in the doorway, looking at them. Theo's smile, the wonderful softness of her eyes and mouth, were a revelation to him, or rather a horrid reminder of what he had seen in the autumn. She had never given him anything like that in all the years they had known each other ; and now this spendthrift puppy, this scapegrace, this swindler's brother——

Hugh was perfectly wild with rage ; he bit his lip and turned pale ; he could at that moment have gone to young Fane and collared him, and flung him on the floor at his feet. But being a civilised man, with more than his share of self-command, he was not likely to run any risk of appearing in the newspapers. He walked very slowly forward to where they were sitting. Gerald Fane rose at once. Theo looked up at her cousin quite innocently, but grew grave at what she saw in his face. When Hugh was deeply in earnest, and only then, he was very like his father.

Theo remembered everything which had gone out of her mind for the last ten minutes, and she was not unreasonable enough to wonder at Hugh's looks.

"You know Mr. Fane," she said to him, and she got up too, standing between the young men.

"Certainly," said Hugh, bowing stiffly to Gerald, whose manner was quite as haughty as his own.

In another moment Gerald had left them, taking off his hat to Theo, who was so much vexed and confused that she forgot to give him her hand. After he was gone, Hugh walked up to a picture, looked at it closely, and then came back to Theo, saying in a quite uninterested voice :

"Shall we go on, or do you care to stay here any longer ?"

"Hugh !" she said in a low, pained tone, "one would think you knew something against Mr. Fane himself."

"What I do know is quite enough ; suppose we drop the subject," said Hugh, without looking at her, and Theo was silent, though it must be confessed that she felt very angry.

Mrs. Hildebrand, perhaps, smiled still more as her two descendants went away. Walking through the other rooms, hardly exchanging a word, treating each other with the stiffest and most offended air, they certainly did not look like attractive young people.

It was just as well that Hugh should keep silence, for anger and jealousy had filled his mind with unworthy suspicion, and he could hardly have said much without betraying it. His whole mind seemed to be in a horrid black fog ; it was a state of things most unusual with him, and he had grace and honesty enough left to be astonished at himself, and even rather ashamed ; but the thought would not be driven away——was it possible that Theo had

made an appointment with Gerald Fane? Of course, all the circumstances made such an idea totally unreasonable, but jealousy can feed on the most unlikely morsels.

Theo's indignation never lasted long, and by the time they got back to Lady Redcliff's she would have been ready to laugh and make friends with Hugh, from whose elder-brotherly airs she had suffered before now; but he was too stern and gloomy for that.

"Good-bye. You are not coming in?" she said to him coldly enough, but there was a gentle, amused look in her eyes that seemed to speak more amiably.

"No," he said; and then he hesitated a moment: "Yes, if I can see you alone. There is something I want to say."

"Come in, then. We can go into the library," said Theo quietly, and she walked into the house with a small sigh.

Ill-tempered people were bores, she thought, and should keep away from their fellow-creatures. It was particularly painful and strange to see Hugh so cross, and she could not—would not—allow that he had any reason for it. Anyhow, it was certain that talking would not improve matters, and though she was half sorry for him, and for what had happened, she did not feel at all inclined to submit to a lecture.

She stood by the library fire, with her hand on the chimney-piece and her eyes bent down. Hugh stood in the middle of the room, by the round table, on which some forbidding old books were lying. He looked at her for a minute before he spoke; her air was very still and cold; but he fancied that there was a little confusion, a faint tremulousness, about her quiet mouth. And certainly he had never in his life been afraid of Theo. Nothing could be calmer than his own manner as he spoke to her; outward agitation was almost unknown to him.

"Theo," he said, "you must forgive me if I make a remark—it may offend you, for I see I have offended you already—but I think you have forgotten something I told you."

There was a certain authority in his tone, and this in itself was a serious mistake in dealing with Theo. She raised her head and looked at him, but said nothing.

"Do you remember what I told you about that man's brother?"

"You know very well that I do," she answered coldly.

"And it does not make you the least inclined to avoid these people?"

"Yes, it did," she said in a sudden way, looking at the fire.

"Oh, indeed," said Hugh.

"But I have changed my mind," she went on. "I don't see why people should be disgraced and ignored, because they have a horrid half-brother. They are to be pitied."

"And treated by you and me, under our circumstances, as particularly intimate friends," said Hugh.

She certainly was a riddle to him, or would have been, if he had not believed her to be in love with young Fane, and he suffered double pain, for, setting aside his own feelings, this seemed like a degradation to his proud, beautiful cousin. And indeed she was a riddle to herself. All her thoughts on the subject had been so correct at first; her love and reverence for Uncle Henry, her resentment on his account, had been so strong! She had owned so frankly to herself that this meant seeing and hearing no more of the Fanes. Yes, she had had many struggles of mind, but a foolish, romantic fancy had been driven back, again and again, by convictions and resolutions like these. Then came to-day, and perhaps it was true that she had been a little mad, but she could not acknowledge it, hardly even to herself, and certainly not to Hugh, who seemed to her to be quite stepping out of his proper place. If she knew at heart that her cause was a bad one, it was not likely that she would confess as much to him.

"Be honest, Theo; don't play tricks with yourself," he said, his bitter tone changing into an earnest one. "You are angry with me, but that is not fair; it is unworthy of you. I don't want these people to be disgraced or ignored. I didn't even tell John Goodall what I knew about Litton."

"Didn't you? That was kind!" said Theo.

Something scornful in her voice stung him into anger again.

"You are perfectly infatuated," he said. "You know nothing of this young Fane—absolutely nothing. You might never have seen him if Goodall had not been idiot enough to bring him to the wedding. He knows nothing of him either. I can tell you a man does not often leave the army as a boy, as he must have done, without some bad scrape to account for it. And a man who was good for much could not

work with Clarence Litton, if he was his brother ten times over. I tell you——"

He stopped, for Theo looked up, and in a moment she said :

"You know no more about that than I do. I want to know why you use such a word as 'infatuated' to me."

"Your manner to-day was reason enough," said Hugh.

"I think you had better go now," she said, in a very low, cold voice, and she turned her face away from him.

Her cousin hesitated a moment. He was terribly disturbed ; he had hardly ever in his life felt so angry or so miserable. All his philosophy and self-control seemed to have melted and vanished away ; they left him a wretched, anxious man, quarrelling with the one person he loved, and, in the failure of all hope, feeling himself lost and whirled away in a storm of bitter passions.

Theo did not look round, and after waiting for a few seconds with his eyes fixed upon her, Hugh took up his hat and went out of the room. But when he reached the front door he could not go any farther, and in another minute he was back in the library, where Theo was still standing, looking into the fire, as he had left her.

She looked up when he came in again, rather absently, with eyes full of proud yet gentle reproach.

Hugh went up to her, holding out his hand, and she gave him hers at once.

"Yes, we forgot to say good-bye," she said carelessly and very low. "Good-bye, Hugh."

"Theo—my dear," he said, "I don't think you have the faintest notion how I love you."

She drew back her hand and looked at him with a slight frown, as if she did not understand what he was saying.

He went on talking, with a voice which could not be kept steady.

"I have only that one excuse for making you angry. I spoke like a brute just now—you must forget it. I certainly have no right to find fault with you. But, Theo, when a man loves a woman as I love

you—— Are you too angry to listen to me?"

"What do you mean?" she said.

Hugh North had often admired Theo's air and glance of supreme scorn, when they were bestowed on other people. This was the first time he had felt the power of them himself.

"Are you too angry to understand?" he said, the colour coming into his face. "You can't forgive me for warning you. You think I had a selfish motive, I see. So I had—everybody has ; but you know very well all the time that I was right."

"I don't care about your motives," said Theo. "I don't understand you. Please go away now. Grandmamma will want me."

"I am not going away," said Hugh.

He was standing opposite to her, and she made a little movement to pass him.

"I must go, then," she said.

Hugh put out his hand and touched her sleeve. She stood still, and then she looked into his face with a softer expression, and said slowly :

"You have never in your life been rude and unkind to me till to-day. I don't know what is the matter with you ; but go away now, and I will try to forget all about it, if you wish."

"If I wish ! There's only one thing I wish for in the whole world. I have waited all the winter, and I meant to tell you to-day. And then, owing to that—well, everything went wrong. But you shall listen in spite of it, for I can't stand this any longer. Theo, don't you think you could marry me, dear?"

"No—never, never, never!" Theo answered, and she shivered all over, and the clear paleness of her face became a sudden, deepening crimson, as she turned away from Hugh, and walked across the room and left him.

He was almost stunned for the moment by her words and manner. He looked after her rather helplessly ; it seemed impossible that she was really gone ; but when several minutes had passed by, and she did not come back again, he went out of the room, and through the hall, and finally out of the house this time, walking at first a little unsteadily, like a man in a dream.

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CHAPTER XXXIX. DICK IN ARCHIE'S SHOES.

IDA found no little difficulty in winning Mrs. Tuck's consent to a second visit to Heatherley.

"To begin with, you are running most unnecessarily into danger."

"But I promised Mrs. Pybus to go again."

"Then I can only say it was very selfish of her to ask you—very selfish."

"She didn't think there was the least danger of infection."

"How did he take it then? By going merely to see his legitimate brother," with a bitter stress on the word "legitimate," which pained Ida even more than Mrs. Tuck intended.

"I am sorry you disapprove of my going, Mrs. Tuck," in a cold tone.

"But you'll go?"

"I must go."

From this unprecedented obstinacy on Ida's part Mrs. Tuck knew that she had mismanaged the matter.

"Well, my dear, you're mistress now," as though Ida's consciousness of her new position had so turned her head as to make her throw off all restraint and all regard for Mrs. Tuck's wishes. Of course, Mrs. Tuck knew that it was neither true nor kind to make this biting suggestion; but Ida's resolve both provoked and troubled her. She was really afraid of infection; but chiefly she was jealous, for herself, of Mrs. John, and for Dick, of Archie. Therefore she spoke with a spitefulness unusual to her; and, towards Ida, unprecedented. Hardly, however, had she

uttered the words than she regretted them, though Ida's sole retort was a look of wonder and of mild and hurt reproach.

"Ida dear, forgive me. You're so much to me that I can't bear the idea of your running into danger; and, to tell you the truth, I can't bear the idea of your clinging still to those people. There; I'm not going to say another word against them, or against your going; only do be careful, dear, as, whatever you may think, you are running into danger," very significantly, making it unmistakable that she meant other and greater danger than that of infection.

With this caution Ida was at last allowed to go—by train from Kingsford; as Mrs. Tuck, morbidly fearful of scandal, thought the gossips of Heatherley ought not to have their attention compelled to Ida's visit by the unusual apparition of a carriage in the little village.

Reaching it by train, Ida sought the doctor's house, but was disappointed to hear that Mrs. Pybus was out.

"Gone for a walk?"

The servant couldn't say. Nevertheless, as Ida was pledged not to enter the infected house, she thought it best before returning to seek Mrs. John in her favourite haunt down by the river. She had just reached the place of their former confidence—the scene of Anastasia's "suicide," and the most solitary part of the solitary walk—when she came face to face with Archie.

In the ten days which had elapsed since Ida's interview with Mrs. John, Archie had made such a rapid recovery that this was the third time that he had been allowed out by the doctor. He was hardly yet, however, outside the shadow of death, and looked gaunt and grey; his face all eyes, and the skin on his lank and trembling hands

seeming to fit as loosely as his clothes. He was a pitiable spectacle to Ida; while the sudden sight of her to him in his weak state was a shock which staggered him, and made him lean for support against a tree.

"Pray sit down—but you'll catch cold. You could sit on this," spreading a light shawl she carried on the very seat where he and Anastasia had sat together.

It was not a romantic address; but the anxiety in her face, in her voice, and in the short spasmodic sentences was of the essence of all romance, and inexpressibly sweet in Archie's ears.

"You forget that I'm in quarantine—leprous," laying on the word a stress which showed Ida he meant something more than physical leprosy—that Mrs. Pybus had told him all.

Ignoring this meaning, however, she said with a wan smile:

"But I needn't use the shawl; I do not want it."

"I may keep it!" eagerly.

"Of course—Archie," hesitating over the name, and pronouncing it shyly. She would let him know that to her at least he was no leper.

He took up the shawl, pressed it to his lips, not lightly and gallantly, but with reverence as to a relic; then hung it over his arm.

There was silence that might be felt for a moment while he looked with the kind of yearning in his eyes of a man's last look on the sun. Ida, feeling intensely the danger of the situation—to herself—blundered hurriedly out with:

"I came to see—I thought Mrs. Pybus might be here."

"She will be here in a minute. Ida, hear me; it is my last chance; I shall never see you again—never again. I quit England for ever when I've strength to travel, and what I would now say to you is as sacred and sincere as dying words. I never really loved that woman, and she—she does not know what love means. Her story—I will not speak of it, you do not believe it. It is not that—not that I would waste this last moment over; but, Ida, my loyalty to you. I have not been loyal to you. In all those years when I thought I loved you, when I vowed and protested to you that I had loved you, I did not really love you. I took a kind of worship for love. I worshipped you as something as far off and as high above me as a star; but I didn't love you. I couldn't

love you, for I thought you couldn't love. But," with a sudden and startling change of manner, which now was hurried, and headlong, and passionately vehement, "but since I knew that you could love, and could love me—love me!" looking with eyes wide with wonder and worship into her face, "Ida, believe me, every thought, and every hope, and every wish, and every beat of my heart, have been yours only, and will be yours only—always. No; do not stop me. I am dead to you now; I know it. If you were free to-morrow I would not ask you. I would not let you share my shame. But to-morrow I shall be as dead to you, and you should hear me now and believe me now as you would believe the dying, who have nothing left to hope or fear in this world, and long only to be forgiven freely, and remembered kindly. Ida, it is all I ask from you, to forgive me and to believe me—to believe that I love you; with all my whole soul I love you, and shall always love you—always—always!"

Here Ida sat suddenly down, faint, speechless, deathly pale, trembling in every limb, looking up at him with the helpless and bewildered anguish in her face one sees beside a death-bed where there is nothing can be done.

At last she said:

"Archie, I am not well. I feel dizzy and confused, and I fear I cannot collect my thoughts to say what I mean—what I must say if I am not to be still more unhappy when—when you are gone," with a dry kind of sob. Pausing for a moment to recover herself, she added: "But you will not go? Not for ever?" desolately.

Archie shook his head sadly, but determinedly, not trusting himself in his weakness to speak. Ida was silent for a moment, looking wistfully up at him, and then said, speaking in broken and abrupt sentences:

"It was not as you say. It was not you that were in fault. Every word you spoke is a pain and reproach to me. Of what do you charge yourself? That you couldn't love me while you thought I had no heart? How could you? Or how think I had a heart when I could accept a man for whom I cared nothing, and while I cared—I cared for another," the last words almost inaudible, spoken in a faltering voice, and a tone of inexpressible tenderness.

What frantic answer Archie would have made we do not know, for at this moment as he bent down towards her, Dick, with Anastasia on his arm, stood suddenly before

them. The path here turned sharply at a right-angle, and the four stood face to face without a moment's preparation for the encounter. Only Dick, we need hardly say, retained his presence of mind.

"Mr. Guard!" he exclaimed. "We understood you were 'bed-fast,' as you Yorkshire folk say. Very glad to find you convalescent. Ida, allow me to introduce to you Miss Bompas—Miss Luard. You know Mr. Guard, I think, Miss Bompas?" This with the most innocent and absolute matter-of-course coolness, seemingly unconscious that Ida had not returned Miss Bompas's bow, or that Archie was glowering fiercely at him and Anastasia. "Miss Bompas and I were arranging a little legal business at first hand," continued the imperturbable Dick, addressing Ida. "Couldn't stand the dawdling of those lawyers any longer, and we've done more in an hour than they in a month. Eh—Miss Bompas?"

"May I ask which way you're going?" said Archie, in a voice that trembled a little, through weakness, excitement, and suppressed rage.

"Certainly; towards the village. May we hope for the pleasure of your company?"

"Come, Ida," said Archie, almost authoritatively, turning his back scornfully upon Dick and his companion, and walking away in the opposite direction with Ida at his side.

"I beg your pardon," cried Dick after him, with still perfect self-possession and good-temper, and speaking now with his usual cool drawl. (Up to this the sudden surprise had had just the one effect upon him of hurrying his speech.) "I beg your pardon, but you seem to forget the risk of infection."

Archie faced round suddenly to say with a withering and significant look at Anastasia, "It was of that I was thinking," and then as sharply wheeled back and walked on with Ida.

"It's monstrous that he should introduce that woman to you."

"I didn't know he knew her," answered Ida, still quite bewildered by the sudden revelation of Anastasia's intimacy with her other suitor.

"He was not likely to let you know it. Ida, he's not worthy of you," speaking with much vehemence. "It isn't jealousy or envy; I'm not speaking as a rival, or even as a rejected or hopeless rival; for I could not—I would not now be anything to you even if you were free. I am thinking only of you, and of your happiness, and I can-

not bear to think of it in such hands. He is a mere heartless fortune-hunter."

"Not that, Archie. You do him an injustice; I did him this injustice myself until after Mr. Tuck's death, when he showed he cared nothing for money."

Then Ida proceeded to vindicate Dick's disinterestedness by an account of his magnanimity in the interval during which she was supposed to be penniless, yet during which the depth and warmth of his devotion were increased a hundredfold.

Archie listened, unconvinced but silent. What could he say? He could only suggest the suspicion that Dick knew all along the true state of the case—a suspicion ungenerous in itself, and which would sound still more ungenerous from the lips of a rival. Besides, he jealously attributed the warmth of Ida's defence of Dick to the opposite of its true cause—to a growing regard for him—whereas it was the remorseful consciousness that her regard for him was not what even in common gratitude it should have been, which made her put his disinterestedness in the strongest light she could. Therefore, Archie was silent for a moment after Ida had concluded her eager defence of Dick; and before either spoke again Mrs. John appeared.

"Ida!"

After Ida, blushing, had explained her presence, Mrs. John accounted for her own absence during these eventful minutes. She had called for a moment at a farmer's house about some eggs, and was detained there to doctor a scalded baby.

"But, Ida dear, you forget the risk of infection!" exclaimed Mrs. John as she interposed herself between Ida and Archie.

"It will not be for want of warning, then. Captain Brabazon has just been giving her the same caution."

"Captain Brabazon!"

"We've just this moment met him and Miss Bompas arm-in-arm."

Mrs. John was brought to a sudden stand in sheer amazement. What! This heart-broken Miss Bompas, with whose woes the world had been ringing, on the arm of Archie's rival! If he and Archie had exchanged places in their relationship to her, why should they not also in their relationship to Ida? For there was no doubt that, but for the discovery of Archie's relations with Anastasia, he would have supplanted Captain Brabazon. Thus Mrs. John reasoned, running rather too fast. For, in the first place, there was not the

least evidence that Dick's relations with Anastasia were of the kind brought home to Archie; and, in the second place, Archie fully and firmly meant what he said: that even if Ida were free, he would not allow her to share the shame of his base birth and of this Anastasian scandal, which there was no possible means or hope now of disproving.

But, of course, Mrs. John at the moment could think only of the complete inversion of the situation suggested by Dick's intimacy with Anastasia. If Dick had stepped into Archie's rather muddy shoes, why should not Archie step into Dick's? Besides, Anastasia's replacing her lovers at this rate was a practical and conclusive contradiction of her story of betrayal, despair, and suicide.

"Well!" cried Mrs. John at last, with a gasp of amazement, and then added, as she walked on, with a sarcastic bitterness most unusual from her: "She had come to commit suicide, I suppose, in the usual place, and for the usual cause."

"We were rather in the way, then," said Archie, laughing, while Ida also smiled at the grotesque idea of a spot which one always chose for suicide. "But this time the cause would be, not 'the pangs of despised love,' but 'the law's delay,'" added Archie, "for Captain Brabazon informed us that, impatient of the dilatoriness of their solicitors, they were merely arranging a legal dispute themselves."

"Arm-in-arm," said Mrs. John dryly.

"Oh, that was in mere token of their reconciliation upon the settlement of the dispute."

"Then it must have been another breach-of-promise suit," said Mrs. John, not jestingly, but caustically, for she was even more shocked than relieved by this revelation of Anastasia's iniquity. "The woman's absolutely shameless!"

"He doesn't think so. He honoured Ida with an introduction to her."

"Then he's shameless!" said Mrs. John hotly. "Forgive me, Ida, but it was a downright and deliberate insult to introduce such a woman to you."

"Well, no, mother. It was the reverse of deliberate, I think. He was surprised into it. He came upon us so suddenly that it was the only escape out of the embarrassment which occurred to him on the spur of the moment."

This, the true explanation of Dick's unfortunate blunder, was the only one conceivable on reflection, even by the prejudiced and impetuous Mrs. John.

"But his parade of intimacy with such a woman is a gross insult to Ida."

"He hardly meant to parade it, mother."

"The intimacy itself is an insult."

This did not seem disputable, and was not disputed. No more was said upon the subject, and, indeed, there was hardly time to say more, for Ida's return train was just due. She took an affectionate leave of Mrs. John, but was not allowed to touch Archie's hand.

"You'll come and see us again when he's out of quarantine, dear?"

Ida turned to Archie.

"You'll not leave Eng—Heatherley before I see you?" hurriedly, eagerly, shamefacedly, with a deep yearning in her eyes and a crimson face.

He hesitated for a moment in distrust of himself.

"To say good-bye," she urged, entreatingly almost.

"I must see you again," he groaned, as though the entreaty came from him.

A TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

WITH night coming on, and the streets everywhere bursting out into brilliant coruscations of light, while already the first skirmishers of the great army of pleasure-seekers are appearing on the scene, and meet and mingle with the still greater force that is hurrying home from work, there are certain points where the whirl and traffic seem to be concentrated, as at the Circus here by Oxford Street. A whirlpool truly is this, whose roar is compounded of the muffled tread of the hurrying squadrons, of the chink of harness, and the subdued grinding of innumerable wheels, of the metallic clatter of as many iron hoofs; of the cries of the newspaper-boys with their evening editions; of the shouts of the omnibus conductors; and of the sharp rattle of the bell of the adventurous wheelman. Countless multitudes advance, are caught up in the whirlpool vortex for a moment, and circle in the glare of lamps and noise of traffic, and then are hurried away by current or eddy to disappear unnoticed into the vague.

Some such eddy caught us up one night, and drawing us from the fascinating circle, left us at the doorway of the Polytechnic. Something in the building and its associations recalls the first impressions of youth, when the lights of London seemed like the stars and spangles of fairyland, and the

doors of the Polytechnic to open upon an unexplored and pleasingly mechanical paradise. And still in the midst of so much change, the outer aspect of the building remains the same. Minerva still wields her spear on the parapet, and carved upon the solid stone you may still read the inscription, "Royal Polytechnic Institute, Incorporated 1838," and no recording chisel has yet added the date of its final dissolution.

As already stated, the outward aspect of things is not very different; the shops that invade the vestibule, the placards, the turnstiles, all remain; but now, instead of the languid stream of visitors that might formerly have been seen, girls and boys, grandfathers and grandmothers, we have the strenuous onrush of young men—nothing but young men, as young as may be, who can be singled out from the ever-passing stream of wayfarers, as, putting on speed as they near the portals of the Institute, they double up two or three steps at a time, and dashing through the turnstiles, disappear in the interior of the building. The place is like a human ant-hill, the throng, the running backwards and forwards, the quick greeting, the challenge, the reply. Only in the real ant-hill there are surely veteran ants; while here, the porter at the gate, the officials who flit about, the professors who are forming their classes, all—all are young; not a graybeard to be seen anywhere. All this excites wonder and curiosity as to the nature of the Institute that brings this swarm of young men to its doors. And this brings us to the secretary in his sanctum—a sanctum that is being continually invaded by eager youths, intent upon cards of membership, or registration, or something of the kind.

Yes, the secretary is young like the rest, but still old enough to remember the beginnings of this great Institute—its small beginnings in a small house in Endell Street, where Mr. Quentin Hogg, the father and founder of it all, began some twenty years ago with a school for working youths, of whom he gathered together a nucleus, numbering some thirty in all. Then followed the transition to larger premises in Long Acre, and on the dissolution of the old Polytechnic the entering in to the shell to be furnished with newly-organised life: all this is within the record of a very few years. The title, Polytechnic Young Men's Christian Institute for Artisans, Apprentices, etc., bears the impress of its

founder's design, which embraced religious as well as technical learning. But there is nothing in the way of religious test on entrance. An artisan, whether Jew, Mohammedan, or Buddhist, would be equally admitted to the advantages of the Institute, and though like the rest he would be invited to the religious services and classes that are held in the building, he might please himself about the matter. In fact, no questions are asked at entrance or afterwards about religious opinions, and the only test is whether there is room for the applicant, and whether he is within the limit of age—between sixteen and twenty-three—and answers to the description of artisan or apprentice. Now the limit to number of members is some two thousand, a limit always reached, and latterly exceeded, and so well appreciated is the Institute that there are constantly on the books applications from eight or nine hundred candidates for membership, who may have to wait from six to twelve months for admission. The subscription which opens out all the advantages of the institute, is just threepence a week, and with that the almost nominal fees to the various classes that may be entered. When we hear that an average number of fourteen hundred young men each night throng to the classes that are held in the various class-rooms between eight and ten, we cease to wonder at the marvellous onrush of youth we have just witnessed.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, the rush of steps up the stairs, and along the corridors, is overpowered as by the measured march of legions. We are in the gallery over the great hall—the hall where once the diving-bell disported in the crystal tide, where the centrifugal railway pursued its eccentric course, and the scientific toy of the period performed its gyrations in air or water. More serious business is now on hand—the serious practice of athletics. The great hall makes the finest possible gymnasium, and here below us the floor is occupied by a great band of athletes in white flannels and jerseys. At this moment is going on a gigantic game of "follow my leader," an evolution known in gymnastic language as the "maze." Amazing it is too, and at the same time agreeable, to watch from this vantage-point the snake-like evolutions of the endless human ribbon that twirls in and out and round about, making a changing pattern of swiftly-moving forms—a human ribbon that ties itself into a knot, winds itself into a

tightly packed roll, spins out again, and twirls all over the floor in bewildering, orderly confusion.

To leave the gymnasium for a time, it is interesting to watch the tide of youth that is surging in, to note how the streams diverge, and how those who come in dusty and soiled in their working clothes disappear into the basement, and presently emerge radiant in shiny boots and well-brushed broadcloth, or in the natty costume of the athlete; and down below the splashing, and towelling, and boot-brushing that are going on are something astonishing. And the general result of it all, it may be said, is highly satisfactory. Everywhere the crowd is a well-dressed one, with a wonderful sameness in height, weight-for-age, and general characteristics, certainly not belonging to the poorer classes, but rather to that class in reality the wealthiest of all—the class of artisans which has all the future before it, the great, rising proletariat, in whom lies the making of the twentieth century. But not at all burdened with the weight of their destinies are these arbiters of the future, but ready rather to whistle and sing on the slightest provocation. Quick in apprehension, with a cheerful mind and ready tongue, and a straightforward judgment unswayed by casuistry, and not much moved by transcendental considerations, there is in the artisan of the future the promise of an even and equal development. And if the coming world fall short of the expectations of the sanguine, it promises to be a cheerful, light-hearted world, marching on to some lively, light tune of its own.

But this is not the place for dreams of a distant future; our energetic guide would not tolerate such a waste of time, when the hours are crammed full of occupation, and every room in the building, from the basement, where more elbow-room is being dug out from the solid earth, to the attic where, perhaps, Minerva being willing, who mounts guards there at the top, further extension may be sought in the direction of the stars. And thus, hurrying upstairs and down, in a labyrinth of passages, we pass through the various class-rooms where the work of technical instruction is going on.

This being Monday, we are among the practical-trade classes. Here in a small lecture-room is an assemblage of twenty or thirty practical young plumbers, each with a note-book on the desk before him, while upon the black-board a diagram grows under the hand of the instructor; a drawing

of some peculiarly-jointed pipe, of which the pupil plumbers make their own rough drawings, and are ready to calculate capacity and all the rest with mathematical exactness. The instructor is himself a foreman plumber, and the rule of this and the other practical classes is of practical teaching by competent trade teachers based upon workshop practice and the requirements of ordinary business. A glance at the course on plumbing may show what we may expect from the future craftsman. First of all he is taught the properties of the metals and other substances with which he has to deal, the chemical action upon them of water, gases, acids, etc.; of solders and fluxes; of blowpipes, brazing and autogenous soldering—a handsome phrase surely. Then of the plumber's tools and their uses; of the manufacture of the metal in adaptation to the plumber's needs—of sheet lead and zinc, of tubes and pipes, the mysteries of gas-fitting, and all the intricacies of drainage and sanitary arrangements. With all this, water-supply, and the plumber's duties in that connection; with roofing and the rain-drainage of houses, and external plumber's work in the way of pipes and gutters; with a host of other matters subsidiary to all these. When the aspirant plumber has completed his course, he is required to attend the examination on the subject held by the City and Guilds of London Technical Institute at Finsbury, and may gain honours in plumbing—even prizes and medals, as many of the Polytechnic youths have already done, or, at all events, a certificate of proficiency that will be of good service to him, not only at home, but in Canada, Australia, or wherever else the roving plumber may wander.

But let none think that plumbing, or any other of the handicrafts, can be attained merely by classes and lectures. On this point, the rule of the Institute is precise and clear. Only those are eligible to the technical classes who are actually engaged in the trade to which the classes apply. The pilgrim plumber, as well as the aspirant for any other mastery, must go round by the wicket-gate of service or apprenticeship. Our sympathies may be with those who would climb over the wall and make short cuts to knowledge, but for such the technical classes of the Institute are not intended. It may be said, however, that the advantages of such classes are not confined to members of the Institute. For a fee, in amount three or four times that paid by members, but not generally exceed-

ing ten shillings a quarter, members of a particular trade may join the trade-classes, even if beyond the limit of age prescribed for members of the Institute.

Leaving the plumbers to their devices, another turn brings us to a different scene—a comfortable coffee-room where there is a refreshment-bar, and where groups of young men are taking their evening meal at appropriate tables. There are newspapers scattered about, and a pleasant absence of that roughness and bareness which is sometimes found in places devoted to temperance refreshments. For it is hardly necessary to say that the Institute is run upon temperance principles, and no flavour of tobacco hangs about the room, for smoking also is prohibited. Our young men—between sixteen and twenty-three, be it remembered—are none the worse for these restrictions. Again, there is a capital recreation-room, where chess and draughts are provided, and more newspapers, but neither card-tables nor billiard-tables; such things would hardly be in character with the objects of the Institute, and although there is considerable freedom of criticism on the part of members, and all kinds of suggestions are made in the monthly journal of the Institute, nobody has proposed to repeal these restrictions.

And no doubt the savings-bank gets the benefit of this abstinence; the savings-bank, which appears in another part of the building, with its volunteer accountants and a respectable fund of deposits. There is a library, too, with a fair supply of general literature.

And here the scene changes, and we come upon a room full of young men deeply engaged with angles and curves, but not concerned with pure geometry, but in the study and practice of the higher elements of the art of practical and artistical tailoring. And this is an art which rewards its votaries with quick and substantial results. A master of the sartorial art, who has taken his degree at the Polytechnic, is pretty sure of remunerative employment. From cutting cloth to turning metal into shavings is, perhaps, an abrupt transition; but here are lathes fitted up, and all the apparatus of a fitting-shop and pattern-room, and a skilled engineer to superintend. From this branch the students attend the examinations of the City of London Technical Institute, already mentioned, which seems to promise to take the position of a technical university, with affiliated colleges in different parts. And then at a

bound we pass from the cylinders of steam-engines to the cylinders of watches, with instruction in all the principles of watch and clock making, the final pass examination being conducted by the same City of London Institute.

Another room holds a colony of young builders who are learning the principles of building construction and drawing, and the elements of civil engineering, with all the details of brickwork, stonework, and woodwork, and all the other works which relate to the builder's trade. For these classes the Science and Art Department examines, as also for the practical mensuration class, and the Practical Plane and Solid Geometry class; while the builder of the future, departing widely from existing types, is expected to master all these subjects if he would be considered indeed a passed master of the craft. At the same time classes are going on in geology and mineralogy, in magnetism and electricity. On other evenings in the week, together with classes of various stages on subjects cognate to those already mentioned, we should find a Carriage-building Class, a Printing Class, and one for silversmiths' work. Then, in more purely scientific subjects, we have chemistry, botany, and the laws of sound, light, and heat, in courses of lessons that must be concluded by sitting at the science examinations in those particular subjects.

Altogether enough, one would think, to bring premature furrows on the brow of the artisan of the period; but, seemingly, it all sits lightly enough upon him; and he may join the drum and fife band, or the reed and brass band, or draw the violin bow in the orchestral band—all belonging to the Institute, by way of distraction from his severer studies. Then there is a fine lecture-hall, where entertainments are frequently given, generally free to members; a swimming-bath, too, is nearly completed. Indeed, with its multifarious agencies, the institution has already overflowed the limits of the old Polytechnic, and has annexed an adjoining building and promises to spread still farther.

And then, for the youth who has more taste for drawing, or design, there is a really good school of art, after the South Kensington model; while pure art is represented by a class for modelling and sculpture.

But although from this list it is possible to gain an idea of the multifarious occupations of the place, it is difficult to give an adequate

idea of the thrill and stir of the scene, the youth and energy, the quick vitality, there present, and those signs which give evidence of a vigorous and successful organisation in full and active existence. And then the question suggests itself, how have these results been obtained, and is their permanence guaranteed by the crucial test of financial result—in simpler words, is this wonderful Institute self-supporting?

First of all, the success of the Institute is due to growth, and continuous adaptation to changing conditions of existence. And this success is the work, in a great measure, of one man, who has devoted much of his time and fortune to the building it up. Thus there has been a kind of unity in the direction and administration of the society's affairs, and when any extra outlay was needed, there was the hand always ready to supply it. The same benefactor purchased the building known as the Polytechnic, has paid the heavy ground-rent, and provided for the expenses of installation. For the rest, the contributions of the members and the receipts for the various classes, including those from outside pupils, balance within a little the current expenses.

It would be difficult to find a parallel for this Institute among any of those, at home or abroad, visited by the Royal Commissioners, who have just made their report to Parliament. The subject is engaging the attention of foreign governments as well as our own. In France, with characteristic logical completeness, a course of technical instruction is, in many of the large towns, linked with that of the primary schools. With us municipal enterprise, as in the case of the City and Guilds, and private munificence, as in the Institute we are describing, have outstripped the pace of government departments. Before long, however, we shall witness the inauguration of a technical college at South Kensington, which will probably give a desirable impetus to the whole system of technical training. But there will always be room for an Institute like the Polytechnic, with its advantages as a centre of social intercourse and sympathetic fellowship.

There is still something wanting, however, which, as far as we have seen, existing institutions do not supply, and that is some preliminary technical training as a supplement to the ordinary elementary school. In most cases the career of the boy is determined by the immediate necessities of the parents. The reading,

writing, and arithmetic he has learnt at the elementary school fit him at once to earn some kind of wage as clerk or errand-boy; and the natural aptitudes of the boy,—and there are probably more born mechanics in England than in any other country under the sun—are taken no account of. If he had been a refractory, unmanageable boy, a truant, or a waif, he might have been taught a useful trade at some home or reformatory. But being, we will say, an honest boy, the son of honest parents, and anxious, too, to add his honestly-earned penny to the common fund, he is doomed for life to an ill-paid and exacting calling because there is no way open to him to any other. And if at a later period, conscious of aptitudes that find no outlet in his present career, he seeks to work into something different, no hand is held out to him; he is one of those who have tried to clamber over the wall, and is turned back by the guardians of the place.

And although there are few positions more enviable than that of the skilled artisan, the master of his craft, who carries under his workman's cap the means of making a good livelihood irrespective of anybody's patronage, and in almost any part of the civilised world, yet between him and the idling loafer, a nuisance to himself and a danger to civilisation, the difference is chiefly one of early training. The elementary school may produce either the one or the other, while schools of much more ambitious pretensions turn out a goodly number of the latter class. Thus it is cheering to notice two of the recommendations of the Commissioners on Technical Education, far from adequate indeed, but perhaps considered as going as far as the Administration would be inclined to concede—the one for making rudimentary drawing an elementary subject, and the other for ranking as a specific subject proficiency in the use of tools. For some knowledge of drawing is almost indispensable in most technical classes; elementary geometry, too, is almost equally valuable; while early practice in the use of tools is the best of preparations for the workshop.

COURTS AND COURTIERES.

It is recorded of a certain youthful scion of provincial nobility, native of Carpentras or Brives-la-Gaillarde, that, having been admitted, through the influence of a com-

patriot holding office at court, to a sight of Louis the Fourteenth in all his splendour at Versailles, he was so dazzled by the brilliant spectacle as enthusiastically to express his conviction that nothing could possibly surpass it. "You are right, chevalier," replied his friend in a patronising tone, "but more than you imagine depends on the setting of the jewel. His most gracious majesty is undoubtedly a great and glorious king, but what is a peacock without his tail?" Whether the "Grand Monarque"—irreverently depicted, by the way, by one of our own humourists, when deprived of his wig and high-heeled shoes, as a very ordinary specimen of humanity—would have relished the comparison, is another question; but it is, at all events, presumable that the chevalier's cicerone, in attributing to himself and his fellow-satellites no inconsiderable portion of the effect produced, was perfectly sincere in his belief, and that his colleagues, if interrogated on the subject, would have been precisely of the same opinion. It is, therefore, clearly demonstrated that, in the estimation, at least, of the parties principally concerned, a court without courtiers would be an anomaly—a very natural conclusion for a man to arrive at when on the look-out for a place, and still more so, perhaps, when he has got it. As, however, there are "fagots et fagots," so are there courtiers and courtiers; and the different varieties of the species being worth studying, we cannot do better than set down here what we remember to have read about them, merely premising that in the great majority of instances a strong family likeness will be found to exist between them.

In bygone days, when the ears of monarchs were less insensible to flattery than they are—it is to be hoped—at present, the office of a courtier was no sinecure. It required no little experience and considerable delicacy of handling to steer clear of the stumbling-block of exaggeration; even old stagers in the profession occasionally overshooting the mark. Much, no doubt, depended on the potentate with whom they had to deal, and on their own intuitive perception how far they might safely go without incurring a rebuke like that addressed by Canute to his courtiers, or the less generally known one recorded of an Eastern sovereign, whose name has slipped our memory. One of his attendants, a youth, recently arrived at court, and desirous of establishing himself in the

good graces of his master, enquired of an old official how he could best attain the object of his ambition. "Nothing easier," maliciously replied the other; "you have only to imitate him in everything, and you are certain to please him." The novice took the hint, and, remarking that the king had a habit of constantly winking, resolved to lose no time in following his example; and was no sooner admitted into the royal presence than he began to wink so persistently that it attracted the notice of the monarch, who asked him if he were afflicted with ophthalmia. "No, sire," he answered, "not in the least; I only wink because your majesty winks, and I thought to please you by doing the same." "You have pleased me without knowing it," said the king to the astonishment of the courtiers, who stood aghast at the young man's presumption, "by curing me, I trust, of a bad habit into which I had unconsciously fallen; but, remember, that in future you will please me more by endeavouring to imitate the good qualities of others instead of their defects."

No man had a keener relish for flattery than Louis the Fourteenth, nor a more thorough contempt for the flatterer whose zeal outran his discretion. That very able prelate, the Cardinal d'Estrées, while dining at the royal table, on hearing the king complain of the inconvenience he suffered from having lost his teeth, so far forgot himself as to exclaim: "Teeth, sire! Who has any teeth nowadays?" At the same time contradicting his assertion by displaying his own, of which, on account of their whiteness and regularity, he was inordinately vain.

The Abbé de Polignac was no favourite at court; the king's dislike to him dating, it was said, from a certain afternoon when they were conversing together in the gardens of Marly. A sharp shower of rain coming on, Louis graciously expressed a hope that his companion's gala suit might not be spoiled by it. "Sire," replied the abbé with a quasi-genuflexion, "the rain of Marly wets nobody!"

Far more to the royal taste was the remark of the young Duc du Maine, when released from his studies in honour of an important victory gained by the French in Flanders. "Sire," said he, "I shall grow up a very ignorant fellow; every time your majesty beats the enemy, my preceptor gives me a holiday!"

Racine was a very bad courtier, and rarely had his wits about him when he

most needed them. Since the production of his *Esther* at St. Cyr he had been in high favour both with the king and Madame de Maintenon, and was frequently consulted by them as to the best means of improving the condition of the stage. On one occasion, his opinion being asked on this subject, he expressed himself pretty freely, and totally forgetting in whose presence he was, imprudently suggested the necessity of withdrawing from the repertory of the theatre a considerable number of pieces possessing neither interest nor merit; "those of Scarron, for instance," he added, "which have nothing but their worn-out reputation to recommend them." The effect produced by this unlucky remark may easily be imagined. After a moment's embarrassing silence, Louis the Fourteenth left the room without uttering a word, accompanied by the indignant widow of the maligned "cul-de-jatte," leaving the unfortunate Racine to meditate in solitude on his folly, and mourn over the loss of courtly favour, which to the day of his death he never even partially succeeded in recovering.

Boileau, or Despréaux, as he was generally called, although far too much a man of the world to commit himself in a similar manner, was fully as tenacious of his literary independence as his brother poet. Being once shown by Marshal la Feuillade a sonnet written by a certain Charleval, he unhesitatingly declared it to be wretched stuff, and by no means calculated to enhance its author's reputation. The marshal, who had already secured, as he imagined, the king's approval of the lines, listened to this unfavourable criticism with contemptuous incredulity, and perceiving the dauphine (mother of the Duc de Berri) coming along the gallery in which they were standing, asked permission to recite them to her, and was rewarded by a gracious assurance from the princess that, as far as she was competent to judge, they appeared to be excellent. Elated by this act of condescension—it may be observed that the dauphine, a German by birth, and imperfectly acquainted with French, had probably not understood a syllable of what she heard—the marshal sneeringly remarked to Despréaux that he must indeed be difficult to please when such judges as his majesty and Madame la Dauphine had deigned to praise the sonnet in question. "M. le Maréchal," coolly replied the author of the *Lutrin*, "I am far from contesting the king's marvellous aptitude for

gaining battles and capturing towns, nor do I dispute for an instant the many admirable qualities of Madame la Dauphine, but, with your permission, where verses are concerned, I consider myself as good a judge as either of them." Thereupon, M. de la Feuillade, in a state of great excitement, demanded an audience of the king, and indignantly charged Despréaux with presumptuous insolence for having maintained that he knew more about verses than his majesty. "Oh," was Louis Quatorze's answer, "if that is all, I am sorry, M. le Maréchal, to be obliged to tell you that Despréaux is perfectly right!"

When the same monarch honoured the Duc d'Antin with his presence at Petit-Bourg, he happened to remark that part of the estate might be greatly improved by cutting down a wood which intercepted the view over the surrounding country. D'Antin immediately gave secret orders that every tree should be sawn almost entirely asunder near the root, so that it might fall as soon as a rope attached to it was pulled, and directed that upwards of twelve hundred men should be ready to do this at a certain signal from him.

Having settled beforehand the day when the entire court should pass that way, he gradually led the conversation up to the desired topic; and, on the king's once more repeating his observation relative to the removal of the wood, simply replied that it could be done whenever his majesty pleased.

"In that case," said Louis, "I should like to see it done now."

He had hardly uttered the words when D'Antin gave a loud whistle, and down fell all the trees.

"Ah, ladies," whispered the young Duchesse de Bourgogne, the spoiled child of the court, to those around her, "depend upon it, if the king had chosen to ask M. d'Antin for our heads, there would not have been one left on our shoulders!"

The episode of Panurge and his sheep in Rabelais would appear to have been attentively studied by the generality of courtiers, if we may judge from the two following examples. When Francis the First was so dangerously wounded in the head by the fall of a lighted torch that it became necessary to cut off his flowing locks, the news had no sooner spread through the town of Romorantin, where the accident occurred, than the services of every available Figaro were in active request, and before twenty-four hours had elapsed, not a single uncropped head was

to be seen. A similar adherence to the imitative principle is noticeable in an epistle of that very voluminous letter-writer, the Duchess of Orleans, addressed to her half-sister, the Countess Palatine Elizabeth, and dated 1676.

"I must tell you," she says, "that just now I am in high favour with the king; whenever we meet, he accosts me with the most marked politeness, and invites me every Saturday to pass the evening with him at Madame de Montespan's, so that I am quite the fashion. Everything I say or do is declared by the courtiers to be perfection, and even my old fur-tippet, which I put round my neck during the late intensely cold weather, has been copied by every one of them, and nothing else is worn."

Louis the Fifteenth, like most people, had his moments of forgetfulness, and frequently embarrassed his courtiers by unconsciously asking them questions to which they had already replied. One morning while at his toilet, turning to a lord-in-waiting, he enquired how many children he had. "Four, sire," was the answer. In the course of the day, addressing the same individual, he repeated the question, and received a similar reply. Even this did not satisfy him, and when the evening came, and with it the usual game of "brelan," he once more commenced his interrogatory, which was this time responded to by, "Six, your majesty." "How is that?" said the king; "you told me this morning that you had only four." "So I did, sire," stammered out the courtier, "and it was the truth; but I was afraid of wearing your majesty by always telling him the same thing."

The celebrated Souwarow hated courtiers, and never missed an opportunity of manifesting his contempt for them. After his recall from exile, the Emperor Paul sent one of his favourites, Count K——, to congratulate the marshal on his return to St. Petersburg; whereupon, the visitor having been duly announced, Souwarow abruptly exclaimed: "Count K——! Who is he? I know no Russian family of that name. Show him in."

When the Count had finished his harangue, the marshal looked at him curiously, and at last enquired of what country he was a native.

"Of Turkey," replied the Count. "I am indebted for my title to the favour of the Emperor."

"Ah, you have doubtless merited it by

your military exploits. In what regiment have you served?"

"I have never been in the army."

"Indeed. Then you have probably gained distinction in the council-chamber. In what branch of the service?"

"In none. I have always been in attendance on his most gracious majesty."

"In what capacity, if I may venture to ask?"

"My post was that of first valet-de-chambre to the Emperor."

"I thought as much," cried Souwarow. Then turning to his servant, "Ivan," he said, "you see this noble gentleman? Well, he has been precisely what thou art; with this difference, that he has had an Emperor for master. Take note what a brilliant example to follow! He has been made a Count, and wears the orders of Russia on his coat. Mark that, Ivan, and never despair. Who knows what slice of luck may be in store for thee!"

The same eccentric personage, who had been for some years in disgrace at court, was one day summoned thither by the Emperor, who intended giving him the command of his troops in Italy. In order that his reception of the distinguished soldier might be at once ceremonious and imposing, the sovereign ascended his throne, and the courtiers in gala costume stood around him according to their rank. What was their amazement when Souwarow appeared in his ordinary attire, without a single decoration or even a sword; and, prostrating himself on the floor, contrived by the aid of his hands and knees to crawl to the foot of the throne.

"What does this mean, Marshal?" exclaimed Paul, horror-struck at the undignified spectacle; "rise, I order you!"

"Pardon me, sire," coolly replied Souwarow; "I know by experience that crawling and grovelling are the best passports to your majesty's favour, as any of these gentlemen will tell you if you ask them."

While at Berlin, Napoleon occasionally amused himself by playing at cards with his suite. His favourite game was "vingt-et-un," and one evening, having been more than usually fortunate, he had a considerable number of gold pieces on the table before him.

"They tell me," he said, addressing General Rapp, "that the Prussians are very fond of these little napoleons."

"Much fonder than they are of the great one," replied Rapp.

Some years earlier, shortly after his return from Italy, the then General Bonaparte gave a dinner to a small party of friends, including Bernardin de St. Pierre, Collin d'Harleville, and Ducis, in his miniature hôtel in the Rue Chantierne. The conversation naturally turned on the recent campaign, and so absorbed the host that when coffee was announced in the adjoining room, he remained quietly at table, notwithstanding Josephine's repeated attempts to catch his eye. At length, finding all her signs disregarded, she gave him a slight tap on the shoulder.

"Gentlemen," laughingly remarked the general, rising from his chair, "I call on you to bear witness that my wife beats me."

"A privilege of which madame alone has the secret," neatly insinuated Collin d'Harleville.

THE HAWTHORN.

AYE, it is well-nigh overed ;
An' I'se none so loth to go,
One can't make much of fourscore year,
Though one tantle 'em never so!
I'se pretty nigh tired out, I say,
Of the wakesome night, an' the weary day ;
The tide is ebbing in the bay,
I shall scarcely wait its flow.

Didst hear how the surf wer' calling,
This morning down on t' scar ?
Just as I strove to lift my head,
To watch 'em over t' bar ;
An' I'se not bid our Jim good-bye ;
An' he comes too late to see me die,
Bid him keep the cobbie trim an' dry,
Nor drive her over far ;

She's stiff in a head wind, tell him,
An' he's venturesome, I doubt ;
Let's see, it's May Day, isn't it,
An' Hawthorn will be about,
Hanging like snowflakes o'er the grass ;
Will't take a walk in the woods, my lass,
An' gather a bit on 't as thou pass,
Afore they lay me out ?

I reckon thou oft hast wondered,
I thowt so much on Jim ?
An' gave him boat, an' gear, an' all,
Though I'se naught akin to him ?
Thou hadst a better right, maybe ;
Well, well, he'll mak' it up to thee ;
Aye, lass, old eyes can offend see,
For all they're waxing dim.

An' it wer' none my Sally—
She wer' a good wife an' all—
Who went wi' us, seeking hawthorn,
Up by the waterfall ;
Lord ! it is sixty long year back,
What sets one's mind on the queer old track ?
Shall I know him up in t' sky—our Jack ?
Hark ! how the breakers call !

Poor Jack ! he went afore me,
For all he won her away,
The lass we plucked the hawthorn for,
That bonnie summer's day ;
She wore his branch an' flung mine down,
As we crossed the beck an' neared the town,
An' I turned away with a sigh an' a frown ;
I feel it, vet. I say.

Poor Jack ! he wer' none so steady,
For all he loved her true ;
I'se offend thowt as our Mary,
Had summat i' life to rue ;
But there—she lies by him still enow,
I put 'em a headstone, up on t' brow ;
Keep the spot pleasant, Jim an' thou,
As he's good right to do.

For I'se loved her grandson dearly,
As thou, my own bairn's child,
Sin' ever with eyes just like to hers,
He looked i' my face an' smiled,
The day she took my hand, an' said,
"See thee—my poor fond lass is dead,
Wi' the raffling lad she wer' bound to wed ;
But thou wert allis mild,

"For aught I asked thee—thou'lt be good,
To the lost little lad ?

For I'se ganging afore Jack," she says,
"An' a heavy time I'se had,"
An' I took the bairn an' sate by her side,
An' hearkened the falling of the tide,
An' at its parting sob she died,
Her glazing eyes looked glad.

I'd like a bit o' hawthorn,
Put 'neath the coffin lid ;
When I'se gone where we'll be satisfied,
Where never a thought is hid ;
Where we ha' done wi' the fret an' care,
That vex us as through t' world we fare ;
An' if my Sally wer' standing there,
I reckon she'd none forbid.

For all comes right i' heaven,
Where love has never a thorn ;
An' I'se done my best for all on you,
Sin' thy father, my lass, wer' born.
How it calls an' calls through the fading
light ;
Look out if the cobbie has hove i' sight ;
I'd fain that Jim should watch me to-night—
I'll be gone afore the morn.

STRAY NOTES IN A CAMPAIGN.

BY A PRIVATE SOLDIER.

A CAMPAIGN, even of the most bloodless nature, is always more or less fraught with incidents, which, amid the accompanying discomforts and hardships of a soldier's life when on active service, tend to keep his spirits from drooping while not engaged in very exciting warfare. It was the lot of the present writer to take a subordinate part in a recent expedition, which, though not altogether devoid of fighting, was far from being of a very sanguinary description. Much of our time was passed during the continuance of the war in lying on the hot, sandy desert ; often without tents, and in imminent danger of being devoured by myriads of flies, whose attentions were only withdrawn from us at sunset. This sort of thing formed a conspicuous feature in our daily routine, and, as may readily be imagined, it did not form a very interesting or lively occupation. The hours dragged themselves on in weary succession, while we lay sweltering in the unmerciful rays of the sun, inwardly lamenting our un-

pleasant situation, and earnestly hoping that some adventure might turn up to release us from the oppressive weight of inaction. Incidents, not, it is true, of a very startling kind, cropped up now and again; and they materially helped to relieve the tedium of our existence. - Perhaps a short sketch of our experiences in the field, or rather on the desert, may prove acceptable to some readers.

Before we could set foot in the land which was destined to form the scene of operations, the seas which intervened between it and the "tight little island" had necessarily to be crossed in a transport-ship. Our regiment was one of those not often called upon to make a voyage; probably not a man in its ranks had previously had any sea experience further than is implied in making the passage from Dublin to Holyhead. A good deal of trouble was at first found in getting the hammocks properly adjusted. Later on, when in the "bay," we had a day or two of rather rough weather. Through the night especially, as it seemed to us, the motion of the ship became extremely eccentric and violent. It was at this time a matter of some difficulty to contrive to keep one's position in a hammock at all. Unhappy recumbents frequently were precipitated into a mixture of bayonets, tin plates, and other miscellaneous articles, which lay about on the deck underneath the aerial hammocks. Of course people accustomed to emergencies of such a kind would very likely have felt quite at home under these circumstances. To our men, however, there were few alleviating features in the case; for all were, in addition to nocturnal tumbling, and the like troubles, suffering in a greater or less degree from sea-sickness. This latter visitation aggravated the state of affairs immensely. The sergeant calling the roll of his company in the morning presented a pitiable spectacle. In the middle of his duty he would abruptly be constrained to make a rush to the ship's side in abject misery, while many of his men were reclining in a condition not far removed from coma in divers secluded corners of the deck. None of them were in a state to indulge in laughter, at either their comrades' or the sergeant's extremities. On one occasion, when most of us had somewhat recovered from this indisposition, a rather untoward occurrence took place. The "mess" to which the writer belonged, was situated beneath the ladder, in a kind of—if we may make use

of the term—subterranean region. It was at dinner-time on a soup day. A man, not yet quite free from the effects of mal de mer, had been entrusted with the important office of fetching the soup, which was conveyed from the culinary quarter of the vessel in a tin can of immense proportions. This soup, by the way, usually closely resembled boiling water in its more prominent properties. By some means—perhaps our orderly-man was of a nervous temperament—he missed his footing at the summit of the ladder, which was at best very shaky and crazy, and down came the soup, can, orderly-man, and all, on the top of us. No serious damage was done, but our jackets were well soaked with the greasy liquid, which was, as well, disagreeably hot. This catastrophe would at home have been a disastrous affair, for, under the full swing of red-tape, all of us who shared in the impromptu shower-bath would inevitably have had to purchase new clothes. Grease, it may be mentioned, for the civilian reader's information, is very inimical to scarlet cloth, or at least to the compound of which a soldier's coat is made. A serious consideration is a spoilt tunic; a new one mulets a man of much of his scanty pay. When on board ship, or in the field, however, little attention is given to the minutiae of dress, and such an accident as the above is of no consequence.

When we at length arrived at our destination, before we could finally leave the transport, a great work remained to be accomplished. We had to transfer to land a large quantity of ammunition, as well as transport-carts, with their appurtenances of horses and mules, together with some field-guns, which we had taken in at a port of call. This operation was being carried on with expedition by large parties of men; but in disembarkations, as in other worldly affairs, accidents will happen. A long row, or file of men, bearing boxes of ball-cartridges, had just cleared the gangway or bridge, a wooden structure, when it made a most unexpected and sudden descent into the water beneath. This contretemps was hailed with roars of laughter, but the consequences would probably have been no subject for merriment had the heavily-weighted land-lubbers accompanied it into the abyss of dirty water looming below; From some reason unknown to the writer, the bridge, contrary to the common habit of wooden articles, sank, and some time elapsed ere another appliance could be procured to replace it—a delay which induced

a good deal of language, more forcible than polite, to be brought into use.

Having survived this, the reader will most likely think, trivial misadventure, and moved a few miles into a strange country, we had for several days a comparatively uneventful life, even for this uneventful campaign. The most prominent feature of the time we were at this place was unquenchable thirst. Another corps, encamped on the sand hard-by, had, by a wonderful exercise of foresight, managed to provide a canteen. Its sole stock-in-trade, however, consisted of a number of barrels of English beer. The thirst of those engaged in military avocations is probably proverbial; but at the time we now treat of, it was accentuated by the intense heat of a tropical sun, and by the hot winds which swept over the sandy plain where we were located. At all events, we proved an unwelcome reinforcement to the regiment already mentioned; for on the very first evening of our advent, the canteen was declared to be "drunk dry." In future, the men of both corps had to content themselves with somewhat less copious libations of muddy water from an adjacent canal, which they euphoniously termed the "cut."

It was in this camp the writer had the questionable honour of being sentenced to two days' "confinement to barracks." The barracks were wholly imaginary, and the confinement entirely nominal, for no sane person would have been likely to venture far into a wilderness understood to be swarming with vigilant enemies, even if there had been any inducement to do so, which was very far from being the case. This inadvertency happened in the following simple way: Any one who is acquainted in the most passing way with that weapon of precision, the Martini-Henri rifle, must be aware that it does not possess any system of half-cock, and he will also know that it has an erratic habit of going off with any slight concussion. On outpost duty, one night, the writer brought the rifle to the ground, happily at a wide angle from the upper part of the body, rather sharply; the result was not only an immediate explosion, but also an alarm of an annoying and unfortunate kind all along the line of pickets. That fine old soldier, the "cornel," before whom we were subsequently arraigned, found himself compelled to view the matter as a sample of carelessness, and making among other remarks the observation, "Can't let you off altogether, you know,"

pronounced the sentence referred to. This was, by good luck, the only opportunity he had of admonishing your humble servant during the campaign.

We soon made a second and a shorter voyage, this time on the waters of a very large canal. The canal appeared, for a great part of its course, to pass between two vast expanses of smooth water, stretching as far as the eye could reach on either side. We have since had reason to believe that these extensive lakes were connected with a phenomenon known as the mirage and that they were, in reality, only howling wastes. With the exception of the ship's going aground once or twice, nothing very remarkable took place during this passage. We did not proceed to the termination of the canal, but stopped at a point about mid-way in its length. A second debarkation had here to be effected. Altogether, a large force was landed at this place, with, of course, correspondingly great impedimenta. The work was, on the whole, conducted in good order, not, however, in the face of the enemy, of whom we had not yet had the ghost of a glimpse. Before the removal of the stores from the fleet was far advanced, necessity for medical appliances arose at an hospital which had been established in a fine palace in the vicinity. But all stores of this kind had been stowed away at the very bottom of the holds of the ships, underneath every other variety of material. Necessarily, in order to reach what was wanted, the superincumbent mass had, in the first place, to be moved to the shore, and this was a matter of time. This fact, we believe, afforded a fertile field for the criticism of the "specials," who were always hovering about the scene of action. Among other things, we think, this affair led to an official enquiry latterly, when the need for medical necessaries and comforts had ceased to be of pressing importance. A number of men, presumably valiant soldiers, had already contracted ailments incidental to service in hot climates, although we had only been ashore in the country altogether for about ten days. This sickness had an ominous appearance; it was a warning of the invaliding which was soon after to set in on a large scale. We had, as well, a couple of men drowned while bathing in some lake in the neighbourhood. Bathing was, therefore, peremptorily ordered to be discontinued, to the chagrin of many devotees to frequent ablutions.

When our own special disembarkation

of men, horses, and stores was completed, we shortly afterwards "took," as it was termed, "to the desert." It had not an inviting appearance. Our first day's march was strongly suggestive of the idea that marching by night might, with advantage, have been substituted for tramping, or rather wading, through the loose, deep sand, under the blazing sun. That orb proved a most doubtful auxiliary to our progress. Before we had proceeded three miles, men began to collapse, and "fall out." The knocked-up men were ultimately picked up by passing ambulances, or kept straggling on in rear of the troops as evening approached. A certain number of them did not rejoin their companies till late on the following day. A notable thing was it that by no means did the men of the greatest (apparent) physical calibre withstand the adverse influences under which they marched so well as might reasonably have been expected. Many of the strongest succumbed, and, on the whole, the "weedy" sort of fellows, those who required plenty of wadding in their coats in the piping times of peace, seemed to stick to it as well as any—in fact, the very men one would have thought would have been the first to give way. The labour of this march was unquestionably very severe, though the distance traversed did not probably exceed ten English miles.

At the terminus of this trying walk a battle was said to be raging. On the horizon flashes of fire could be seen, and dark objects rising in the air were surmised to be shells. On the conclusion of hostilities, newspapers of this date became accessible to us, and we discovered that this had been an action of some consequence; and we read, what was still more surprising, that therein we had been "under fire." The latter statement somewhat "staggered" us, for it was the first we had heard of the circumstance, and we had certainly not noticed being under that condition at the time. We were far out of range, even of artillery. What we did notice, however, and that with emphasis, a few hours later, was the absence of the carts conveying our provisions, and what was of at least equal moment, our supply of water. For nearly twenty-four hours men kept looking out wistfully to the rear, hoping to descry these dilatory vehicles approaching. But in vain; for they were securely fixed up to the axles in sand, some miles distant. We were now beginning to realise the exigencies not only of war, but of hunger and extreme

thirst. The situation was not a little exasperating. The water-bottles, which we carried suspended from our shoulders, were well adapted for use on a field-day in January at Aldershot, but they were hardly equal to the demands of the present standard of thirst. Our haversacks as well, in order to make room for a handful of biscuits, had to be emptied of other treasures, such as a pair of socks, a clean shirt, or a towel. We were, therefore, entirely without supplies of water or of any kind of food, the small quantity of biscuits being quite exhausted. Of ammunition we had abundance, and it tended to remain intact. In fact, it did so remain till the end of the campaign. Nor did our bayonets ever draw blood. Their temper was never proved further than is implied in boring holes in straps, or in the scratching of names on foreign sentry-boxes. Yet the members of our corps (and of several others) are decorated with medals, having the honourable appendages of clasps bearing the name of a great and decisive battle. As a matter of fact, in this campaign, fighting was a secondary consideration; and as far as our division was concerned, we only once smelt powder—and that wafted on the breeze from a distance—during the progress of the struggle. But we are anticipating. Let us return to the urgent matter of the carts.

These unfortunately-designed transport-carts had too evidently been constructed to travel on well-made, hard roads. On such, with a pair of horses, they would probably have been efficient, even if heavily laden. But four, or even six horses failed to get them over this portion of the desert; in short, the transport service, at this period, and in this particular, was an absolute breakdown. On the day in question strenuous but futile efforts were made to force a way onward with the vehicles. Men were detached to push them; to dig in front of the wheels. The horses were urged to the utmost, but to no purpose. They could not hope, that night at least, to overtake the columns in front; and the party in charge, to the intense chagrin of the young officer in command, had reluctantly to prepare to pass the hours of darkness "in statu quo." Nor was this a singular case of sticking; the whole desert was dotted with such bivouacs, as far as the eye could reach over the level sand. Next day, by means of additional animals borrowed from some more lucky regiment, the carts were extricated, and

mostly succeeded in reaching us in the evening. If we had really been engaged with a resolute enemy, and had expended the cartridges in our pouches, these carts would have formed the very proper subject of an "Inquiry," which, by the way, has since been held regarding the transport organisation in that campaign.

A week or two after this spirited entry on "active operations," during which interval we had been without tents or other protection from the rays of the sun, and had also been minus blankets or great-coats to lie upon at night, somebody high in authority suddenly took steps to have the latter garments brought up to us. They had meanwhile been lying in a heap at the place on the canal whence we started.

One fine morning, "Fall in for your big coats!" was the first mandate we heard. Another and smaller canal passed near the spot where we were at this time bivouacked, and it was understood that the coats were on board a barge which had come up by that channel. A considerable party having been got together was marched to the place where the coats were (not) to be found. Arrived at the canal, several barges were to be seen; but the one bearing the grey shoddy was not visible, and for a most satisfactory reason. We were informed by sundry bargees standing about and clothed in the uniform of the Royal Navy, that the vessel in question had gone down, but that proceedings would ere long be taken to raise it. We never ascertained what had caused the barge to founder, but in the course of time we got the coats, covered with mud, and with the enclosures all mixed up, or entirely lost in some instances. We had wrapped up shirts, boots, and other things in them previous to "rolling" them. They had evidently, however, undergone a minute inspection before being put on the barge, for numerous articles, and some coats, were missing. It was not for us to reason why, but we thought that the muddy water could scarcely have undone the fastenings, however hastily done up.

For about a fortnight we remained at this point excavating obstructions which a laborious enemy had thrown up in the canal and over the parallel railway. We had parades as well, in the early morning, the chief and most fully attended of which was the doctor's parade; a very large proportion of our number was to be found in the vicinity of that officer's tent. Men now began to be sent off sick somewhere over the sea. If the campaign had

lasted for as many months as it did weeks, we should have required an entirely new battalion, as the present members were fast vanishing. Sunstrokes became disagreeably frequent. Apropos of this, one of our men who was employed at a station on the railway, lay down one afternoon to take a half-hour's rest. He still rests there, for an hour or two afterwards he was buried in the spot which he selected for his siesta.

But a move ahead was soon made. Early one morning we were told that an engagement was in progress some miles in front, and we were ordered to prepare to march forthwith. The coats were taken to the barge (now repaired) again, and in a very short time all was ready. A cloud of skirmishers was thrown out over our front, but there was no appearance of the foe, though we could see a great way over the desert, which was devoid of brushwood or cover of any sort. A number of staff officers kept galloping about, full of zeal and activity, but it was all thrown away, for we never saw the combat. We never even heard the sound of the cannonade. After a march, to which the first one was by comparison child's-play, we reached what had been the contested field towards nightfall. During the advance, the country in rear of the columns was a most inglorious spectacle. Men who had fallen out lay about in all directions, or straggled off towards the canal, which ran about a mile to the left of our line of march. Some of them did not overtake us till morning, so exhausted were they. Instead of becoming acclimatised, events went far to show that the soldiers were becoming weaker and more unfit to bear the heat of the day, or at least, that they were to a great extent incapable of heavy marching. We found a large body of troops encamped near the field of battle. The contest was reported to have resulted in a great victory for our arms; and having disoused a substantial repast of biscuits, water, and onions—of the latter the enemy had left an unlimited supply—we lay down to sleep on the sand in the ordinary way, without covering of any kind.

Several days had passed in inactivity here, when, one evening, we were instructed to get ready for an immediate march. A heavy, and, it was hoped, a decisive blow was to be delivered at the enemy on the morrow, and the troops were to march all night to take part in this great event. The succeeding night-march

has been well described by able pens, incomparably superior to that of the ordinary Tommy Atkins; but one alarming incident occurred which we feel constrained to record. The reader who has perused the history of this memorable campaign will recollect that in the course of the famous night-march a long halt took place. We had all fallen asleep during the said halt, and were peacefully lumbering, when a prodigious hubbub awoke the writer, in common with everyone else. Men were grasping their rifles, shouting, fixing on their bayonets, and running about wildly in every direction. Horsemen were said to be among us, making dire havoc. The excitement and panic were very great, and, I may add, most unsoldierlike. One fellow, starting up, seized his weapon, and dealt a man near him a tremendous blow on the ear, stunning the unlucky individual, and carrying away a portion of the unoffending organ. Others were rushing about, with their pieces at the "charge," like mailmen, and the scene was altogether one of the wildest confusion imaginable. It was unpleasant to reflect on what would have been the results if the imaginary horsemen had really appeared. The officers, making great exertions, ultimately restored order, and we relapsed into silence and repose, as before.

Next morning we were saluted by some shells flying overhead, which plunged into the sand, where they exploded, making alarming cracks, and sending the sand and gravel sputtering around. We are not about to attempt to describe this battle; to us it was no battle at all—it was simply a walk over ground where a short, but severe struggle had taken place a little before our arrival. Having traversed the scene of the conflict, we got to the camp of the enemy, from which they had been ejected in a somewhat summary manner. Some tents, lots of cannon, and a few storehouses, were here, together with numerous horses and camels. In various situations were large pyramids of onions, and also of small loaves of bread. The pyramid in this country seemed to be a favourite formation in which to heap up stores of any kind. Bags of corn for horses were set up in pyramids, so were boxes of shells for Krupp guns. We almost wished we could find a pyramid consisting of materials out of which to extemporise a good breakfast. A repast of canal-water and some brown-bread, seasoned with onions, made our fare in

this now famous and historical camp, where we remained a day and a night.

At the conclusion of the period of time just stated, we took our places in a long train of bullock-trucks on the adjacent line of railway, and after a long and unpleasant journey, from our cramped position in the waggons, we found ourselves marching through the streets of the capital of the country. We entered the courtyard of a barrack; the barrack-rooms bore a striking likeness to illustrations we had seen in a work called *The Arabian Nights*. In the place of beds were large cushions running round the walls of the rooms. Here, as in other places, were pyramidal heaps of onions, which, we concluded, must be most popular vegetables among the natives. The barracks were entirely uninhabited by natives of human form. We had good reason to believe, however, before morning that they were far from being untenanted by other forms of life. In fact, the activity of these other species was so great that we found it quite impracticable to attempt to sleep in the barrack-rooms; the majority of us reclined outside on the parade-ground. In the morning the writer ascended to the roof of the building, which was flat, and adapted for people to walk about upon. From this point of view we had a good prospect of the city, and afar off descried what seemed to be pyramids of a more permanent construction than any we had hitherto seen.

In the course of a few days the barracks were cleaned out; but it was found impossible to extirpate the aboriginal residents therein already alluded to. We therefore moved out to a piece of ground in front of a palace, where tents had been pitched. There we sojourned, till the first tap on the big drum on the day of departure announced to us that we had commenced our homeward journey.

NATURE'S GREAT SCOURGES.

THE *Annuaire* of the Bureau des Longitudes for 1884, contains one more of M. Faye's lucid Scientific Notices, and long may it continue to produce them. For it is an annually renewed pleasure to become acquainted with the views of so patient and acute an observer respecting interesting and important physical facts.

This year, his subject, treated in masterly style, is *Les Grands Fléaux de la Nature*—The Great Scourges of Nature—suggested

by the sudden catastrophes of Ischia and Java, and calling forth from him the remark that one day, perhaps, a time will come when civilised nations will include in their budgets a determinate sum to meet similar inevitable disasters, and thereby forming themselves into a mutual assurance society against the irresistible outbreaks of natural forces.

But science has already done something to protect us against the violence of blows inflicted by the raging elements as well as by other natural scourges. Conductors ward off lightning from our dwellings; the Oriental plague and leprosy have almost disappeared; the ravages of small-pox are greatly restrained. Other pests have been traced by Pasteur to the action of imperceptible and mysterious creatures—whether vegetable germs or animalised microbes—and the hope of counteracting them thereby promised.

True it is, M. Faye observes—and not less sad than true—that there are other scourges still more terrible than those of nature, which would be more amenable to our own proper efforts if reason exerted its legitimate influence; namely, wars and revolutions. Neither volcanoes, nor inundations, nor famines, nor plagues, cause equal devastation with those self-inflicted pains. Can we hope that the progress of reason and the increasing inter-communication of peoples will gradually attenuate those scourges and finally cause them to disappear?

Famines are the first of the natural inflictions which M. Faye passes in review. The earliest famine on record is that which occurred in Egypt under Joseph's ministry. His well-known mode of meeting it, by holding stores in reserve during abundant years, has since been followed in divers countries; in France, for instance, at the beginning of the present century, and at Naples, under the reign of Charles the Third, in the middle of the last century. The conditions of agricultural produce in Egypt were, and still are, exceptional. Everything there is dependent, not on local rains, for there are none, but on the rains which fall far away, in the equatorial regions where the Nile takes its source, without receiving a single affluent after the seventeenth degree of latitude. Those rains determine the inundation of the soil of Egypt—the unique, but indispensable, condition of a harvest.

In Joseph's time, and thousands of years before him, Egypt was decimated by

famine whenever the Nile failed to rise high enough to irrigate the soil and cover it with fertilising moisture and mud. Neighbouring countries, the coasts of Phœnicia, Asia Minor, Greece, Sicily, and Northern Africa, did indeed escape the scourge, thanks to the local rains that fell there. They were able, frequently, to supply the needs of Egypt. But in those days, maritime commerce did not exist. Egypt, blockaded on two sides by deserts, could only count on the wise administration of her own resources. At a later period, maritime commerce rescued Egypt from dangers of starvation. In abundant years, she enriched herself by the export of superfluous grain; in years of insufficient inundation, she was able to purchase grain from abroad and receive it at the port of Alexandria.

In Egypt of the present day, at no distant future, when posts of observation shall have been established in Abyssinia and beyond it on the course of the Nile and its affluents, connected by a telegraphic wire with Cairo, the Egyptians will know, several months beforehand, and within a foot or two, the height the Nile will attain at each inundation, and can take their measures accordingly.

In other countries, famines depend on the rains which either do not fall, or fall in excess, in each distinct locality. The evil is more severely felt in countries where man is monophagous in his diet—where he sustains life exclusively, or almost so, on one single article of food; as in India and parts of China, on rice, and quite recently, in a less degree, in Ireland, on potatoes. If rain fails, rice, the thirstiest of grain-giving plants, fails also; if rain is in excess in quantity and continuance, the destroying fungus spreads and the potato rots.

Periods of drought evidently follow some general law, depending on the upper currents of the atmosphere. They constitute a grand problem which belongs to equatorial meteorology rather than to anything that can be observed at the Poles. M. Faye consequently holds that it is the former which ought to be closely studied, whereas stations within the Polar Circles, besides being cruelly painful and dangerous, can furnish only very indirect contributions to meteorological science.

An attempt has been made to connect dry and rainy periods with the maxima and minima of spots on the sun. But nothing has been proved to bring conviction.

The final conclusion is that there is no correspondence between the two sets of phenomena, and that it would be in vain to predict inundations, droughts, or famines from the presence or absence of spots on the sun.

Our comfort is that, amidst the frequent variations of those phenomena, veritable compensations without doubt occur throughout the whole globe, and from one year to another. If rain fails on one portion of a continent, it will not fail throughout the whole of that continent; in any case, it will not fail over a whole hemisphere. Consequently, if harvests fall short in one country, they will be abundant in other more or less distant regions. But, at the present day, commerce and navigation are able to carry the superfluities of one country to other less favoured districts. For civilised nations the scourge of famine no longer exists. It happens only in vast monophagous populations of India and China, who are isolated from the rest of the world, or in certain parts of South America deprived of means of communication. The progress of civilisation will eventually abolish famines, although their physical causes are beyond our reach.

"Going to sleep upon a volcano" is an unusually truthful figure of speech; for if all volcanoes are alike in many respects, they are especially so in the irregularity of their eruptions, which are the very reverse of periodical. For instance, in the same volcanic region as Vesuvius and Etna, we find Epomeo, in the island of Ischia, which has had only one eruption in fifteen centuries, and Stromboli which, for the last three thousand years, has had one every quarter of an hour, and is thus virtually continuous. From time immemorial, it has served navigators in the stead of a lighthouse with intermittent flashes.

No confidence whatever can be placed in any volcano's apparent calm. Prehistoric Vesuvius was believed to be extinct until the too confident inhabitants were undeceived by the frightful catastrophe of A.D. 79, at the beginning of the reign of Titus. The sides of the mountain then were covered with the vines which still produce *Lachryma Christi*, a white wine pronounced by M. Faye to be "très passable." In the vast, almost level crater, slightly sloping towards the sea, there were small pools of rain-water, groups of chestnut-trees, big blocks of lava, scoria, and caverns. The aspect of the spot indicated former volcanic activity, but no one suspected that the fires

extinct for so many centuries were about to burst forth with sudden violence. With this irrefutable historical precedent, it may, without exaggeration, be asserted that, although a railway has been constructed up the mountain's flank with its two stations, its forty-five horse-power machine, its excellent restaurant, post-office, telegraph-office, and museum; the whole, namely, the entire cone and all that stands on it, might very possibly be one day shot into the air by an explosion.

Not, however, probably without warning to those who choose to attend to it. Earthquakes were felt from A.D. 63, and they shortly became so serious that Pompeii was partially evacuated. But the inhabitants very soon returned. They had already repaired their dilapidated homes, when the great eruption of 79 buried three whole cities.

A like warning was given previous to the terrible catastrophe of 1631, in which the eruptive column of vapours and cinders mounted at one jet to the height of ten or eleven thousand feet; six thousand head of cattle grazing on the mountain-side were destroyed or suffocated in the course of a few minutes. Streams of incandescent lava issuing from numerous apertures, directed their course towards Torre del Greco, Portici, and other towns and villages. The inhabitants made no effort to escape until it was too late. Struck by burning projectiles or surprised by lava between two currents of fire, as many as four thousand, it is said, lost their lives. As to the houses which the lava reached, they were either swept away or buried. It was then understood how imprudent it is to neglect the warnings given by Vesuvius itself. Subterranean noises had been heard; frequent earthquakes had been felt. The water in wells had sunk and turned muddy; the trees growing in the crater were uprooted and thrown down. Everything announced an impending eruption. But the population, clinging to their lands, their homes, and their property, could not resolve to flee in time.

Even when eruptions are mild in appearance, no certainty can be entertained that they will long continue so. In 1872, Vesuvius presented a splendid spectacle. On the 23rd of April, the cone was almost covered with lava streaming directly down from the crater. A great number of inquisitive individuals went to get a nearer view of what was going on. But on the 25th, finding that these lava streams had

ceased to flow, they thronged towards a single current issuing from a mouth that had opened at the base of the cone. M. Palmieri, warned by his seismographic apparatus that their situation was perilous, caused them to be informed of their danger, but in vain.

"An immense crowd," says the *Journal l'Opinione*, "was on the road leading to Resina, and thence to Vesuvius. It spread in all directions over the beds of cold lava that had been left by former eruptions, in order to obtain a better sight of the advancing stream of fire. Suddenly a subterranean noise was heard, overpowering the cries of terror uttered by the now really frightened multitude. A second rumbling noise still louder followed, and in an instant, close to M. Palmieri's observatory, an immense fissure opened darting out fire, which consumed every creature within its reach. A certain number of persons were engulfed in the abyss. All who could took to flight. But flight was almost impossible over pointed stones and sharp-edged slag, while they were blinded by clouds of smoke and steam, which prevented their seeing where to set their foot. Meanwhile, the lava was advancing, spreading itself out like a broad stream of fiery mud, hissing, crackling, with the sound of drops of water falling upon boiling fat." The terrified inhabitants of far subjacent villages fled to Naples; some even did not feel assured of safety until they had got as far as Rome.

The recent eruption of Krakatoa caused a still more fearful destruction of life. The number of victims, at a rough estimate, is believed to have been thirty thousand. The simple and inoffensive inhabitants lived happy and contented under the paternal administration of the Dutch. Persuaded that the earth is a flat disc resting on a colossal serpent whom they regarded with deepest veneration, they were strangely alarmed when they felt the ground begin to tremble beneath their feet. More than one of them, says an eye-witness, stooped to the ground, using both hands as a speaking-trumpet, to shout to the serpent, "Take care; mind what you are doing; there are people here!" An instant afterwards there was nobody—nothing but the corpses of the drowned inhabitants.

Steam, the vapour of water, M. Faye believes, is the essential, the only agent in these phenomena. Volcanoes are formed along the feeble lines of the

terrestrial crust, not far from the sea, which supplies the infiltrated water required to produce the vapour. If we consider the manner in which the terrestrial globe has cooled, it will be seen that the apparition of volcanoes is intimately connected with it. In fact, the grand geological movements which have occurred are owing to the circumstance that the earth's crust cools faster and deeper under seas than beneath continents. The basins of the seas, therefore, sink lower and lower, whilst the tendency of continental regions is to rise. The consequence is the formation of lines of fracture along certain coasts where the upward and downward movements are the most strongly pronounced. M. Faye, it will be understood, belongs to the school of geologists who believe that the interior of our globe is still in a state of igneous fusion; he does not agree with the new opinion that the earth is completely cool and solidified to its centre.

However this may be, it is evidently impossible to resist the ravages of volcanoes by any human means or strength. The most that can be done is to divert the course of a stream of lava by cuttings or by dykes of earth and scoria. Although an eruption about to break out soon gives its premonitory signals, there are no means of predicting an eruption to come off at the expiration of any considerable interval of time. But it is very easy to recognise the countries that are subject to these disasters. Those who settle there knowingly encounter a certain amount of risk; and that is all that can be said about the matter.

It is scarcely a transition to pass from volcanoes to earthquakes. The latter are especially awful from the suddenness and rapidity of their action. In Ischia, on the 28th of last October, the shock only lasted fifteen seconds. On the 4th of February, 1797, the rich town of Riobamba was destroyed, and more than twenty thousand inhabitants were buried under its ruins in less than a minute. The terror inspired by these catastrophes is also something extraordinary. The population of Lisbon had the greatest difficulty in shaking off the remembrance of the famous earthquake there. They imagined, for what reason is not clear, that it would recur every hundred years; they feared its return in 1855. Even animals—pigs and dogs especially, manifest their alarm when they feel an earthquake. Humboldt beheld

even the crocodiles of the Orinoco, usually as mute as our own little lizards, rush bellowing out of the trembling bed of the river and take refuge in the forest hard by.

It is rare that really serious earthquakes are not accompanied by subterranean noises, compared to the rumbling of heavy-laden waggons or the rolling of distant thunder. Sometimes, however, the strange noises are heard without the slightest shock being felt. In 1784, at Guanaxato (some seven thousand feet above the level of the sea), subterranean roarings and groanings were heard for nearly a whole month. The inhabitants wanted to quit the place and to abandon the rich silver mines still unworked. But the local authority set matters to rights and brought the fugitives back in charge of gendarmes, assuring them that no danger existed; that warning should be given should any danger arise; and that, for the present, a few religious processions would suffice. A small anti-earthquake Salvation Army was all that was required.

After the late calamity in Ischia, the inhabitants—bidden to rebuild their houses with stone—were provided, instead, with one-storeyed cabins put together with planks fastened by iron cramps and braces. Certainly, sheltered in this way, the population need have no fear of future shocks. But such a measure can only be temporary. A town of wooden huts, if safe from earthquakes, is liable to destruction by fire; besides depressing and discouraging the people from efforts to regain their former prosperity. The poorest peasant will always prefer his small stone-built cottage to the roomiest wooden hovel.

M. Faye, during a late tour in Italy, made his way to the ruins of the Piccola Sentinella Hotel, where the fall of a concert-room made so many victims. Close by, the more solidly constructed portions of the building, such as the handsome stone arcades, have perfectly resisted the shock, showing only a few insignificant crevices. But what most struck him was the nature of the rubbish composing the ruins, proving clearly that all the demolished houses had been built of bad materials, such as shapeless rough stones cemented rather with clay than with good sound mortar. Secondly, the faulty construction of the Italian terraces and ceilings stares you in the face. Even when the walls stood firm, the ceilings parted in the middle; and, finally, the very founda-

tions were insufficient. The majority of houses stood on tufa, or on the clay produced by its decomposition, while those on solid foundations held good. On comparing these demolished houses, which scarcely retain a trace of their original form, with those in Pompeii which almost all resisted the terrible earthquakes of the year 63, M. Faye cannot help believing that the fearful catastrophe of Casamicciola would not have occurred had the houses been as suitably and solidly built as those of the Roman city.

He was also informed by M. Tacchini, the learned director of the observatory of the Roman college, who long resided in Sicily, that the inhabitants of a village on the side of Etna have, in their gardens, a simple little hut, constructed with planks, in which they take refuge at the slightest symptom of an earthquake. When they fancy the danger is over, they return to their houses. Why should not the same plan be adopted in the island of Ischia? It is certain that precursory signals would not be wanting. But what will take years to cure, are the fears with which the catastrophe has filled foreign visitors, preventing their profitable resort to a lovely spot whose climate is so delicious though its soil is so unstable.

For what M. Faye says of tornadoes, whirlwinds, and that class of formidable phenomena, I can only refer the reader to this Notice itself. One of these sunshiny days, let us hope, the whole series of Notices Scientifiques from his pen will be collected in one or more volumes, which will give them a better chance of being accessible, entire, to the English reader. I cannot help, however, quoting his strong opinion respecting the study of atmospheric phenomena in Polar regions, suggested to him by the sad fate of the Jeannette. "Let us dare to say, to avoid similar tragical results in the future, that there is no scientific interest in making a nearer approach to the Pole than has been already accomplished; but there is an enormous interest for humanity that we should not drag into like attempts the choicest specimens of the human race, with no other attraction than the conquest of natural difficulties, sending them to perish in those fatal regions, without the slightest profit or advantage to anyone whatever. No; there is nothing to be done there;" nothing but the useless sacrifice of valuable energy, intelligence, and life.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XVII. GRANDMAMMA.

THEO felt as if she had gone through an earthquake, which had shaken down all her shelters and defences, and left her standing alone among the ruins. After the adventures of that day, she was intensely tired and deeply sad. In losing Hugh she seemed to have lost everything, and to her constant, affectionate nature, the loneliness was dreadful. It was bad enough for him to be angry with her—unreasonably angry, she thought, though with twinges of conscience—but his making love to her was too perfectly horrible. There was no way back now into the old happy days when she had a brother, and loved him with a peaceful confidence. Her brother was gone; perhaps he had never existed, except in her own imagination. Helen, Hugh—her own belongings, her own playfellows—they were both dead, Theo thought in her misery. But Helen's death had been gradual, while Hugh's was a shock that she could hardly bear or understand.

So her grandmother had been right about him! But her hints had made very little impression on Theo's dreamy mind, and certainly had not prepared her for the horror of the fact. How Lady Redcliff would triumph, if she knew—what Theo certainly did not mean to tell her.

For two or three days she bore her trouble in silence; she was very gentle and tender to her grandmother, whose returning health showed itself in the old irritable ways. At last, one evening, when Theo had played at bezique with more than usual carelessness, and when she was sharply reproved had made no answer, but had gone quietly away to the fire with a book, Lady Redcliff burst out:

"Theo, you are the most odious young woman! What are you sulking about now? Come out of that corner and talk to me. Since that day you went to the pictures with your cousin, you have not spoken a single word."

"Haven't I?" said Theo, a little startled by this accusation.

The fact was that something else had come to trouble her—something more present, more interesting, perhaps more dangerous, than that discovery about Hugh. Twice since her visit to Mrs. Hildebrand, she had looked out of her window in the

early morning, and had seen a figure strolling in the distance through the square, with the air of someone she knew, and had once more, since that day, promised herself to avoid. And this very afternoon, coming in from a drive with her grandmother, he had met and passed them close to their own door. Theo had seen him very well, though she would not look at him, for she hardly felt as if she could meet his eyes calmly.

Infatuated! That was Hugh's word, and Theo flushed with anger as she thought of it.

She had taken great care, when she got out of the carriage, and followed her grandmother into the house, not to look where she knew he was, twenty yards away. She knew very well that he had seen her; she was vexed, and wished that he would keep away; and yet—she hardly knew what she wished; she was overstrained and miserable. Her eyes looked hollow, her cheeks pale and thin, as she laid down her book and came nearer to her grandmother's armchair.

"I wish you would go back to Staffordshire," said Lady Redcliff; "I'm tired of your dull looks."

"There is no peace anywhere," said Theo. "But I would rather stay here, if you don't mind."

"I do mind; but of course a selfish girl like you always has her own way," said Lady Redcliff, her sharp eyes studying Theo's face with a curious uneasiness. "Why don't you want to go back to Staffordshire? Has he left it? Is he here—in London? As for peace, you know that's all humbug. You don't want that. You wouldn't have it if he was in this room."

Theo tried hard to look unconcerned, to raise her eyes and answer with composed dignity, but her eyelids refused to be lifted, and the long lashes were suddenly wet with tears. For once she shrank in fear from her grandmother's mockery, and was turning to escape from the room, when Lady Redcliff said in a deeper voice than usual, perhaps not without a suspicion of laughter in it:

"Don't run away from your old grandmother, baby. Take courage now, and tell me all about it. You were getting better, but a fresh attack has come on these last few days. I've been in love myself, though you may not believe it, and your grandfather was not by any means the first of them. So nothing you have to say will astonish me, my dear. You must tell some-

body; you haven't many friends, and that Goodall woman would tell her husband, so, for want of a better, here am I."

Theo walked slowly back towards the fire. Her grandmother's kindness was a rare thing, and comforting, though it did not drive the tears away.

"I have nobody in the world but you," she said.

"You know I am a witch," said Lady Redcliff, after a moment's silence. "Now I know what happened the other day when you went to see the pictures, and I shall tell you, because I know you won't tell me."

Theo made no answer.

"You will believe me another time," Lady Redcliff went on. "Hugh North asked you to marry him—didn't he?"

Theo still kept silence.

"You needn't answer, for I know it," said her grandmother. "Stupid ass! I hope you snubbed him nicely, and that he won't come here any more."

"I don't think he will," said Theo, under her breath.

"Offended, probably—conceited fool! Well, you had no right to be surprised, for I warned you. But what is making you so miserable now? Sympathy for him?"

"Don't talk about him, please," said Theo.

"No, poor wretch! he is quite uninteresting. I should have liked to see him—but, however, as you say, he's knocked off, and there's an end of him, I hope. And now, witch as I am, I can't tell you quite so much about the other one, except that you met him in Staffordshire."

"Grandmamma, you are too dreadful," said Theo, her mouth curling in spite of herself into a smile, while she rested her hand and head on the chimney-piece. "There is no other one—at least there ought not to be."

"Ah, that's a very different question," said Lady Redcliff with a small grin. "'Is,' and 'ought to be!' Even you, good as you are, and well brought up—even you can't make those two jump together always. Why are you so unhappy about it? I suppose he has no money. Then he can't be a snob, like the Goodall creature. Where did you meet him first?—at their house?"

"No, they don't approve of him," said Theo.

"Then I am sure I should," muttered Lady Redcliff, and Theo looked round with a sudden brightness in her face.

"Do you know, I believe you would like him very much," she said; but then the clouds came back, and she hid her eyes again.

"Well, where did you meet him?" said Lady Redcliff, restraining a chuckle.

She had to repeat her question once or twice, and she did it with wonderful patience, for she was really interested.

"At Helen's wedding," said Theo at last.

"Dear me! Did he run after you into Staffordshire, then?"

"Oh no; he lives there; he was John's best man."

"I thought you said they didn't like him?"

"They don't, now," said Theo.

There was always a darkness and dinginess about Lady Redcliff's room, with the one lamp standing on her little table. She sat herself in the light of it, small and wizened, and wrapped in a black shawl. Everything about her was black: her eyes, her cap, her gown; she was like an old raven sitting there, talking hoarsely, laughing sometimes with a painful croak. She peered curiously across at Theo, standing in all her young grace and beauty in the shadow by the fire; now and then a flame sprang up and lighted her pale face, the softly-rounded outline of her cheek.

"Don't imagine, grandmamma," said Theo presently, when she had conquered her tears, and gained a little self-control, "that I——"

"Of course not. Preposterous! Don't I know my own sex better than that?" said Lady Redcliff in the highest good-humour. "Now tell me his name, and then let us have the whole story."

The name deepened her interest still more, for, strange to say, her own first love, perhaps sixty years ago, had been a Captain Fane. But he was poor, and her father had sent him away, and he had been killed somewhere on the other side of the world, in some skirmish with refractory savages. The hard old face softened as she told Theo the story in a few half-mocking words.

"And as that certainly was a life worth saving," she said, "I have never believed in anything but Nature since. Yes, Miss Theo, I went through fires then, which you cold-blooded modern creatures have no notion of. That was long before I came across your Maynells, my dear. Not one of them—no one I ever met in my life—was as beautiful as Charles

Fane. If your man is related to him, I shall ask him to come and see me."

Theo sat on a footstool by the fire, and listened to all this, her eyes fixed earnestly upon her grandmother. It seemed easier to talk now, and, after a few minutes, she told her simply and truly the whole story of her acquaintance with the Fanes. She mentioned Mr. Litton and Mr. Warren; in fact, she told Lady Redcliff all the complications, and went on very calmly till he came to that adventure at Burlington House the other day. Then her voice shook, and she looked away at the fire, but till she went bravely on:

"Hugh brought me home—and you were right about him. I wish he would not have made me so very unhappy. I seem to be in a sort of maze altogether; and now, grandmamma, you see I am really telling you everything. I have seen Mr. Fane in the square three times since then, though he told me he was only in town for two days. I saw him this afternoon, when we were getting out of the carriage."

"How dreadfully shocking!" said Lady Redcliff. "Why didn't you call him, and introduce him to me? You are a stupid child, Theo!"

"I know I was right," said Theo sadly. "He had much better keep away altogether."

"You don't wish to see him again?"

"No—I don't think I do. It will be better not."

"The soul of prudence!" said Lady Redcliff with a slight sneer. "Well, I am sure you are right. It must be a disgraceful position, manager of a coal-mine—not fit for a gentleman—and I suppose the way you hardly keep you out of starvation. You would have his little sister on our hands, too, for though no doubt she might prudently marry that rich scamp, I suppose you wouldn't let her; and besides, it wouldn't be a nice connection."

"Please don't talk like that. I can't bear it, and you don't understand me at all," said Theo, colouring deeply.

"Why, I was praising you. I said you were the soul of prudence."

"I am not, grandmamma. I don't think money and position matter in the very least. But that affair of Uncle Henry's—that does matter tremendously."

"One wouldn't choose exactly to have a scandal in the family, though they are often very pleasant," said Lady Redcliff. "As

to North reasons, I can't enter into them, and I don't see why they should affect you."

"Ah no, you don't," said Theo sadly. She got up, drawing herself slowly to her full height with a sigh. "Will you go to bed now? It is very late," she said.

"You have nothing else to tell me?" said Lady Redcliff.

Theo shook her head.

"I want to forget it all now," she said, "so don't ask me any more questions. I sometimes think I had better go out as a missionary."

"Do. Your adventures would be so amusing, and nobody wants you in England," said her grandmother.

She behaved very well to Theo after that evening, watched her anxiously, and made her go out as much as she could.

Mr. Fane was not seen again in the square.

As the spring days went on, Theo did not brighten with the sunshine and the leaves; she looked, indeed, so ill and unhappy, that Lady Redcliff one day asked old Dr. Peters what was to be done with a tiresome goose of a girl.

"What is the matter with Miss Meynell?" said Dr. Peters. "Is it lungs, or heart?"

"Heart," said Lady Redcliff, making a face. Fortunately Theo was not in the room.

"Those are difficult cases," said Dr. Peters. "Change and amusement. Miss Meynell's organisation is different from yours, Lady Redcliff. Her circulation is not so good, and her spirits are naturally low."

"Oh, stuff! they used to be excellent," said Lady Redcliff. "She is not one of your limp girls; she has a violent temper."

"Well, well," said the doctor soothingly. "Change and amusement, I say. Go to the Italian lakes for a month or two, and take her with you. It would do you both all the good in the world."

"What! I?" said Lady Redcliff. "You are mad, Dr. Peters! Good-day to you."

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CHAPTER XL. DICK AGAIN HEROIC.

DICK, riding direct from Heatherley to The Keep, reached it before Ida, who had a long round by rail to go. He at once sought his aunt to unburden his soul of his wrongs.

"Did you know Ida had gone to Heatherley?"

"Yes."

"What, to meet that fellow?"

"To see Mrs. Pybus."

"To see that Guard, or Chown, or whatever his name is, if he has a name."

"What nonsense, Dick! She promised me not to enter the house."

"Did she promise you not to meet him outside the house, alone, in a lonely place, where they never could have met without an assignation?"

"Ida make an assignation!" in an accent of scornful incredulity.

"Make it and keep it, to bill and coo with that fellow, who ought to be taken up for trying to spread infection," cried Dick with a calculated vehemence extraordinary from him.

"If she met him it was a mere accident."

"A most extraordinary succession and coincidence of accidents, then — to meet him away from the house, in the loneliest part of a lonely bye-path, which no stranger could have found out."

"But you found it, it seems," with a sudden and shrewd suspicion that this obviously worked-up excitement of the impassive Dick was of the offensive-defensive kind. Not that any thought of Anastasia crossed her mind at the moment, but she imagined that Dick had dogged

Ida, quarrelled with her, and hurried home to have the first word. That the quarrel was groundless she had no doubt at all for Ida was incapable of making such an assignation.

"I was walking with Miss Bompas——"

"Oh!" in the tone which expresses "Now I understand."

"I was arranging that affair of yours with her in her mother's absence," in an aggrieved tone.

"In the loneliest part of a lonely bye-path," echoed his aunt.

"The walk wasn't of my choosing," grumbled Dick in a still more aggrieved tone. "That Miss Bompas seems to have gone off her head ever since the affair of the suicide, for she can talk of nothing else, and would bring me to see the place where she attempted it. Just as we reached it she clutched my arm convulsively, and I looked round to find that fellow stooping over Ida. It seems a favourite trust of his."

"Of hers, you mean. I suspected all along that this Miss Bompas was at the bottom of those business visits to Ryecote. At such a time, too! All I can say is, if you've lost Ida, you deserve it," with exceeding warmth.

"For surprising her in an assignation!"

"Dick, you're not such a fool as to suspect Ida of an assignation, and I hardly thought you could be so foolish as to pretend to suspect her," with much asperity. "She couldn't do an underhand thing. If she had meant to meet him, she'd have said so. Nothing would induce her to consent to a clandestine meeting, and there was no inducement to it, besides. She's her own mistress, and has a perfect right to meet him, if she likes, or marry him, if she likes, either."

His aunt's white-heat, due not so much

to Dick's aspersion of Ida as to the transparent motive of this aspersion—the covering of his own relations with Anastasia—had the effect of reducing Dick to his accustomed coolness.

"Of course, my dear aunt, she has a perfect right to meet him or marry him, only I thought, perhaps, with her nice sense of honour, she would feel it due to herself to jilt me first."

"What's the plain English of all this abuse of Ida? Not that you found her, naturally enough, talking to her cousin, who has been at the brink of death, but that she surprised you walking with that woman hanging on your arm. I declare I never heard of anything so silly and insane as your entangling yourself with such a woman at such a time! Can't you see what you've done? You've just done all you could not only to damage yourself, but to raise this cousin in Ida's opinion. For how can she believe now that this creature was heartbroken and driven to suicide by his betrayal and desertion? She will now know her to be an artful, perjured woman, and know that you knew it too."

"I've no doubt at all, my dear aunt, that Ida will think all this if you put it into her head; otherwise, I don't suppose her imagination will take so high—or rather, so low—a flight. If you choose to think I can do nothing right, and Ida nothing wrong, of course there's no more to be said. I've given you a very simple explanation—"

"Simple! It's simplicity itself, and adapted to the simplest minds. Only I think I should keep it for them—for Ida, for instance. Do you really suppose I had no idea till now of the meaning of your sudden devotion to business, and to business with such a woman as Mrs. Bompas? Pshaw! I'm not yet in my dotage."

"What you call my 'sudden devotion to business,'" retorted Dick with the air of one contemptuously condescending to meet a contemptible charge; "what you call my 'sudden devotion to business' was unfortunately neither sudden nor pleasant. It was so unpleasant that I didn't choose to trouble you before with an explanation of it. I had to go to Rye-cote so often of late simply to keep my creditors at bay. It is true that, though I had worry enough of my own, I took a good deal of trouble to arrange your affair with Mrs. Bompas, and even that other scandal—the threatened breach of promise suit—with her daughter. Not, I need

hardly say, to spare that fellow the disgrace and punishment he deserves, but simply and solely to save Ida pain. I had just succeeded in arranging this last business when we met those two, and in gratitude to the girl, who had really behaved most generously, I introduced her to Ida, who wouldn't condescend even to return her bow. I think, then, you may believe me, my dear aunt, when I assure you that no one regrets more, or with more reason, than myself my foolish share in the business. I can only promise you that I shall never again meddle officiously either in your affairs or in hers."

So saying, Dick quitted the room and the house in the deepest dudgeon, or an admirable imitation of it—which, his aunt herself couldn't decide.

Not till next morning after breakfast did he reappear, and then only to reproach his aunt and Ida by a manner reserved to sullenness. Some letters had come for him in his absence, and one of them he tossed, when he had read it, with a gesture of scorn, to his aunt, and then quitted the room.

"DEAR CAPTAIN BRABAZON,—On hearing the particulars of that meeting this morning, my mother retracted her consent to my withdrawal from the suit. She cannot see, and I cannot myself see, why we should be asked to show such consideration for the feelings of Miss Luard, who herself shows so little consideration for the feelings of others. At the same time my mother wishes me to thank you for your very generous offer, and still more for the very generous manner in which it was made. She hopes that you will kindly spare us the pain of a personal interview to press this request again—in vain—upon us. She thinks that legal matters are best transacted through lawyers, and you will, I'm sure, forgive me for agreeing with her after my distressing experience of this morning. You at least were then so kind and considerate that I think you will be glad to hear that I am better. It was foolish of me to take that walk, for I always feel faint when I pass that—that— Yet the walk has a kind of fascination for me. —Let me again thank you for the assistance and sympathy you were so good to give me at such a moment, and ask you to believe me to be sincerely and gratefully yours,
ANASTASIA BOMPAS."

This letter was a great relief to Mrs. Tuck, helping her to believe that she

believed what she wished true with her whole heart. When Ida had given her version of the meeting, Mrs. Tuck inferred from it that Archie had completely exculpated himself, inculpated Dick, and recovered with interest his cousin's affections.

Now, she truly believed Archie utterly worthless. His base selfishness in allowing Ida to incur the risk of infection confirmed her worst impressions of him, for Ida had not thought it worth mentioning that Mrs. Pybus (notwithstanding the precautions she took) had the doctor's assurance that there was now not the least danger of infection. But, besides his moral, there was Archie's social worthlessness to make him simply odious in Mrs. Tuck's eyes. From every possible point of view he was objectionable—abominable to Mrs. Tuck's thinking—as a suitor of Ida's.

She would have been rejoiced, therefore, to keep Ida to her engagement, if only to secure her from Archie. But besides and above this, she worshipped Dick in spite of the few faults she could see in him. With, then, these two overpowering motives to bias her belief, it is not to be wondered at if she began to persuade herself of the truth of Dick's defence.

To Ida the letter was conclusive. It must be remembered that her view of Dick was very different from that of the reader. Dick had shown himself a hero in saving her life at the risk to himself of a frightful death; and had been hardly less heroic in pressing upon her, when she was penniless, a suit which, when she was an heiress, he could hardly bring himself to urge. Here now was a third act of heroism—his attempt for her sake to save his rival the exposure and disgrace of a breach of promise suit—in perfect keeping with the other two. Therefore, that which was antecedently probable to her thinking, was made absolutely certain by this letter from Miss Bompas. For Ida's mind belonged to that despondent class to which the wish is father, not to the thought, but to the fear. Minds, like metals, absorb the kind of light which they give off—despondent minds what makes against them; sanguine minds what makes for them. Ida was all the more disposed to believe that Dick's relations with Anastasia were of the business and magnanimous kind he represented them to be, because the only other construction of them held out to her a hope of escape from the wretchedness of her false position.

After Mrs. Tuck, having read the letter,

had handed it to Ida, she exclaimed as though to herself:

"Dear! I wish I hadn't been so hasty; but the mere mention of that girl made me forget myself and Dick. He has always been such a stock and stone where women are concerned, that I might have known he would never have stooped to a flirtation with any one, and least of all with that creature. But you said nothing, Ida!"

"No; but——"

"You cut that woman? Of course you did." Then, remembering that whatever she said against Anastasia was in Archie's favour, she hastened to add: "The girl herself may be very much to be pitied, but after her mother's outrageous conduct here, you couldn't do otherwise than cut her."

However, there was no possibility of rehabilitating Anastasia in Ida's opinion. Whatever Dick might be, Anastasia was a wily, wicked, odious woman.

"He would never have thought of introducing her if he had known what sort of woman she was," answered Ida in implicit justification of Archie.

But Mrs. Tuck was not going to imperil a now nearly certain victory by accepting battle on this doubtful field.

"Well, perhaps not, my dear. The fact is, he was too much set upon his object to be nice about his instruments. If he forgot for a moment what was due to you, it was because he was thinking so much of doing you this service. But then, how were you to know this? He had not the least right to resent your doing what you couldn't help doing in your ignorance of the circumstances. But, Ida, I don't think it's that he resents. From something he let fall yesterday, I fancy jealousy has a good deal to do with his ill-humour. There, my dear, you needn't defend yourself against such an absurd suspicion to me. I know very well that your feeling towards your cousin is, and could be now, only a feeling of pity. But you know how a man, so much in love as Richard is, will mistake trifles light as air. And I must frankly say, my dear—speaking from your own account of the affair—he might naturally feel hurt to be so snubbed by you and your cousin at the very moment when he was doing what he could to render both of you a very great service."

This was a conscience-smiting speech, and struck home.

"It was very generous of him," Ida said, not ardently at all, but penitently, and

with a face of keen distress, less at the thought of the wrong she had done Dick, than at the thought of the falsehood and unhappiness of her own position.

"You must let me tell him you said so, Ida, and he will forgive me my hasty scolding for the good news," cried Mrs. Tuck joyfully. "And, my dear, I think I wouldn't go again to Heatherley. Of course I know your visits mean nothing; but Richard is rather sore and sensitive about them. My dear, jealousy is the shadow of love, and the brighter the light the blacker the shadow, you know."

"I shall have to go once to bid my cousin good-bye," said Ida desolately.

"Good-bye! Why, where is he going?"

"I don't know. He doesn't know himself yet. He's going to live abroad."

"Always?"

"Always," rising to leave the room.

Dick on his return in the evening, still unappeased and sullen, was received by his aunt with a flag of truce. Ida was penitent, and expressed her penitence in the flattering form of praise of Dick's generosity. This news, which lost nothing in Mrs. Tuck's version, was received by Dick with a rather gloomy ungraciousness. His finest feelings had been so hurt as not to be wholly healed in a moment.

"Does she mean to break with that fellow?" asked he, as though issuing an ultimatum.

"I don't know what you mean by break with him," answered Mrs. Tuck with some asperity, annoyed by his morose and grudging acceptance of the olive-branch. "There's nothing to break off there."

Then Dick, perceiving he was overdoing the part of indignant virtue, rejoined more pleasantly:

"You wouldn't have said so if you had seen them together yesterday."

"I told you their meeting yesterday must have been a mere accident, and so it was."

Then Mrs. Tuck gave him Ida's account of her chance encounter with her cousin.

"It might have been a mere accident, as you say; but it looked a very happy accident."

"Would you have had her cut her cousin because he has been at death's door, and had other troubles of all kinds? As for their meeting having any other meaning, it is enough to say he is going to quit the country."

"What! To escape this suit?"

"Quit it altogether, for good."

"He can't go till this suit is settled; as it might have been but for his own insolence yesterday."

"Oh, I don't think the suit matters much, or will come to much. You see there's so little to lose on either side, either of money or character."

"At least it will keep him in the country till it comes off."

"Then, if I were you, Dick, I should continue your most generous intervention, and get it settled."

This she said with a significance which made Dick doubt her belief in his story. In truth, she shot this arrow as an insurance against Dick's laughing at her simplicity, the kind of ridicule she dreaded most.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

WARWICKSHIRE. PART III.

THERE is no more imposing view than that from Avon Bridge, just out of Warwick town, where the winding Avon murmurs below, and, half concealed by the luxuriant foliage, rises the hoary rock with its mantle of the freshest verdure, while the proud feudal towers of Warwick Castle blend with its mass, and continue it in a long line of turrets and battlements. Here we seem actually to be in presence of the feudal magnificence of other days, while the very name of Warwick brings to the mind impressions strong, if vague, of the stalwart bearers of the title in ancient days, and the stirring scenes in which they bore their part; culminating in the great Kingmaker whom Bulwer Lytton has not inaptly called *The Last of the Barons*. Some may be wise to remain content with this charming glimpse, as it were, into another and vanished world, for perhaps the charm is a little dispelled on a nearer approach, when it is seen how much of the great pile bears a modern and an artificial appearance. Fire, too, has destroyed much that was characteristic, not, indeed, of the old line of strong, ironclad barons, but of the more modern Grevilles, dating from the days of the Stuarts, and with stirring memories of their own.

It is strange, too, that through all the varied annals of those who have occupied this castle, and borne the historic title of Warwick, popular affection has clung to the legendary lore of the ancient Saxon lords of tower and town with unwavering fidelity. Not with the Kingmaker, but with the semi-fabulous Guy, is Warwick

associated in ballad and chap-book story; not with the Wars of the Roses, but with the slayer of the giant Colebrand, and the monster cow of Dunsmore Heath. Still in the porter's lodge of the castle are shown the relics of the old Champion of England against Danes and other monsters, his helm and coat-of-mail, his two-handed sword, his gigantic porridge-pot, big enough to cook the mess of a whole regiment of ordinary warriors. De Neubourgs, Maudits, Beauchamps, Nevilles, Plantagenets, have fretted through their respective parts, and yet have scarcely succeeded in impressing the popular imagination; all these were the champions of a caste, an order, or a dynasty. But the legendary Guy of Warwick, the champion of a people against a barbarian horde, has in fame outlived them all.

In any way, it seems clear that this rocky promontory over the river, commanding such a stretch of rich river-meadow, with fertile pastures, and fruitful cornfields without end, must, from the very earliest times, have been the stronghold of some powerful chief. The monkish chroniclers attributed the first building of a castle on the rock to Gutheline, by some called Cymbeline, of whom, as the father of Imogen in Shakespeare, we have some knowledge, if not of a very accurate kind. Nor is it unlikely, as the same author affirms, that here Caractacus, whom the Welsh call Caradawg, held the fort against the Romans. This Caradawg was, the Welsh bards relate, the son of Bran the Blessed, who, being a prisoner in Rome for seven years, as a hostage for his son, brought the Christian faith to the nation of the Cymry; and in this way Warwick might well have been one of the earliest seats of the Christian faith in England, when that faith was still in its infancy. Anyhow, Warwick is said to have been the seat of British bishops, the last of whom, St. Dubritius, retired into Wales before the invasion of Saxon heathendom. And thus vanish the half-mythic heroes of the Britons, such as Morvidus, who slew a giant, who had assailed him with a young tree plucked up by the roots—the origin of the ragged-staff in the badge of the Earls of Warwick, just as the bear is said to shadow forth the renown of Arthgal—a mighty hunter in those days of old, whose name in Welsh is significant of his prowess over bruin.

To these succeed the heroes of the Saxons, hardly more substantial as historic personages, and yet not to be scouted as

impostors—the famous Guy, and Reynburn, the son of Guy, “who having been stolen away in his childhood and carried into Russia, upon his return to England wedded the beautiful Lady Leonetta, daughter to King Athelstan, and dying beyond seas was buried in a certain island near unto Venice.”

From these pleasant glimpses into the fairyland of history, we come into the gloom of written records, where the fancy may be tripped up at any moment by grim-visaged facts and inexorable dates. And so in Doomsday we have the curt record of Alwinus as vice-comes of Warwick, for strictly there was no Earl of Warwick till after the Conquest, as the great Saxon Earldom of Mercia included the whole district. Alwin's son, Turchill, was one of the few Saxon nobles who retained high office under the Conqueror, the care of the castle and town of Warwick being left in his hands; but soon after, Turchill disappears from the scene, and we come upon the first Norman Earl of Warwick, one Henry, seigneur of Neubourg in Normandy, where his castle commanded a fertile plain like that surrounding Kenilworth, whose rich verdure must have made Warwickshire seem familiar, although the latter is of richer beauty. Roger, the next Earl, carried war into Wales, and conquered Gowerland on his own account, that lonely peninsula of Gower, where he has left traces of his handiwork in the ruins of a fine baronial castle. To Roger succeeded William his son, and after William came Waleran. Waleran's days were vexed by the incident of a missing brother, reported as slain in the Holy Land, but who turned up—either he or his double—and claimed Earldom and castle, but could not prevail against the rights of possession, sustained by stout men-at-arms and skilful bowmen. Waleran dying, left a young widow and infant son, Henry, and it is noticeable that the Countess gave a thousand pounds and ten palfreys to the King, that she might continue a widow as long as she pleased, and retain the custody of her children.

During Henry's long minority, King John gave the lordship of Gower to William de Braose, who is noticeable in Welsh annals, but who has not much to do with Warwick. The Earl, however, seems to have acquiesced in the King's disposal of his belongings, for he was one of the few who remained constantly faithful to King John and to King Henry his

successor, and in opposition to the great majority of his order. The loyal Henry was succeeded by an equally loyal Thomas, who died without issue, so that the lordly heritage came to his sister Margaret, widow of the Earl of Pembroke.

The lot of an heiress in those days of so-called chivalry was not a very enviable one. If a maid, her hand was disposed of virtually to the highest bidder; a widow, as less amenable to orders, had more choice in the matter. Thus when Margaret came into possession of the Earldom and its strong castle, the king—Henry the Third—"being at Bordeaux in France, sealed a charter to John de Plesssets—a favourite courtier—granting the marriage of her in case he could get her good will; and if not, that he should have the fine due thereupon to the King." Lest Margaret should steal a march upon them and marry somebody else, she was called upon to give security not to marry anyone displeasing to the King. To end all difficulties, Margaret at last made up her mind to marry De Plesssets, who enjoyed the Earldom during his lifetime. But the royal charter did not ensure a family, and the pair dying without issue, the inheritance ran back to the descendant of Waleran's daughter Alice, who bore the ill-omened name of Mauduit. And Mauduit had little luck with his Earldom, for he lost his castle, which was taken by the rival garrison of Kenilworth, neither had he any heir to succeed him, except his sister's son, William de Beauchamp, with whom began the famous line of warriors and statesmen, who have made the name of Warwick historically interesting. Of this line was Guy, called after the Saxon hero, the Black Dog of Arden, as he was named by the favourite Gaveston, who paid for the sneer with his life.

And now we come to Earls, of whose persons we can form some idea from existing sepulchral monuments. The collegiate church of St. Mary of Warwick has suffered severely from fire, but happily the choir of the church and the Beauchamp Chapel were spared in the several conflagrations; and here lies Thomas Beauchamp, the son of the Black Dog of Arden, as well in body as in his marble effigy, side by side with his faithful Countess, who died in the same year, their hands clasped in the marble sleep of centuries. About the knee of the Earl may still be discerned the knightly garter, for he was one of the original knights of that order. In the same

church, too, remain the monumental brasses of another Thomas, the son of the last-mentioned pair; the tomb itself was destroyed in the great fire of 1694. This Thomas was guardian to the young King, Richard the Second, and was concerned in the suppressing of Wat Tyler's rebellion—"that foul insurrection of the Commons"—as Dugdale calls it, which had spread even into Warwickshire, and among the Earl's own tenants. Some palace intrigues drove the Earl from power, and he was presently banished to the Isle of Man, and then brought to more rigorous imprisonment in the Tower, while Thomas Holand, the son of fair Joan of Kent, and the young King's half-brother, enjoyed and occupied his castle and estates, and had the custody of his heir.

With King Richard's collapse, and the change of dynasty, Warwick was restored to honours and estates, but did not long enjoy them. His will, dated in 1400, mentions the sword and coat of mail, the relics of the famous Guy. Thomas died in the following year, and was succeeded by Richard, one of the grandest and most splendid nobles of his age. He made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem with a magnificent retinue, passing through Italy, and being entertained on his route with all kinds of pageants and tournaments by the nobles of the great cities. At Jerusalem he was made much of by the patriarch, and even the Souldan's lieutenant, who had heard of Guy of Warwick from the story-tellers of his own race, received him with all honour. From Jerusalem Richard returned to Venice, and then set forth on an adventurous journey through the wilder parts of Europe, to Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Prussia, and Westphalia, everywhere feasting, jousting, and exhibiting his knightly prowess and famous horsemanship. On his return to England, our Earl was retained as the special servant of the new King, Henry the Fifth, when he showed himself a stern foe to the Lollards, and presently, as governor of Calais, he entertained the chivalry of France and England with splendid tournaments. Soon after, we find Earl Richard riding off to the council of Constance with a train of bishops. And then he followed his master to the French wars; one of the faithful few at Agincourt, among the names to be henceforth familiar as household words—

Harry the King, Bedford, and Exeter,
Warwick, and Talbot

At the siege of Rouen which followed,

Warwick's pavilion stood between King Henry's tent and the bold height of St. Catherine, with its fort showering down stone bullets upon the besiegers—the post of honour and of danger; and when Fort Catherine was taken, he occupied Port Martainville, close under the city walls. When Rouen was taken, and all Normandy submitted to the conqueror, rich lordships in the conquered land rewarded the companions of the King. But Nemesis pursued the actors in this wanton invasion, and the ruin of the feudal aristocracy in the succeeding Wars of the Roses may be directly traced to the greed and demoralisation brought about by the spoiling of France. Henry, wasted away by some mysterious disease, passed into a premature grave, and his son, crowned King of France and England, passed through the sad life of a gentle idiot, the sport of warring factions, to a miserable tragic death. Nor did our Earl long survive the conquest he so strenuously helped in, but died at Rouen, and was buried with much solemn pageantry in this chapel of his attached to St. Mary's, Warwick. His effigy of latten gilt, reclining upon a grey marble tomb, is one of the best works of art of the period, and has been a delight, in its full detail of armour and knightly accoutrement, to many generations of archaeologists.

Henry, the son of Earl Richard, succeeded to his father's honours, and was created Duke of Warwick, the first and last of the title. For he left only a daughter, who died forthwith unmarried, upon which castle and Earldom devolved upon Richard Neville, afterwards the King-maker, son and heir of Salisbury; who had married a daughter of Earl Richard's, and through her obtained this splendid dower. And yet the poorest cottager in England need not have envied the destinies of this splendid house of Warwick. The King-maker's two daughters were each wedded to Princes—the eldest, Ann, to Edward Prince of Wales, and afterwards to Richard, who became King of England; yet she lived miserable and neglected, and died, it is said, a death of her husband's contriving, while her issue perished in immaturity. The other sister, Isabel, married the Duke of Clarence, and had a son, Edward Plantagenet, who, if strict hereditary right had prevailed, should have been king, but who spent a wretched infancy and boyhood in prison, and was executed, ere yet a man, on some miserable pretext, in order to make good the title of

the house of Tudor. There was a daughter, too, married to Sir Richard Pole, and after her brother's execution gratified with the dignity of Countess of Salisbury, whose terrible end most will remember, dragged by her grey hairs to the block.

And now the old, time-worn towers of Warwick are bestowed upon a new race, springing, likely enough, from the ranks of those who had long toiled and spun to maintain all the gilded splendour of the proud house of Warwick. The father of the Dudleys is said to have been a carpenter, one John, born in the town of Dudley, who, travelling about for work, found employment at Lewes Priory, in Sussex. The monks found him useful, and called him John of Dudley. His son Edmand, a very clever boy, was taken notice of by the prior, sent to school and college at the expense of the convent, and, showing great abilities in finance, was taken into the King's exchequer, and eventually made one of the justices fiscal, whose mission was to exact all kinds of unpalatable fines and contributions. The further history of the Dudleys has already been recited. And here, in the chapel of the Beauchamps, lies the handsome, proud, and wicked Earl of Leicester, in all the bravery of marble and alabaster, and close by him his brother, known as the good Earl of Warwick. And in the choir is the marble altar-tomb of Falk Greville, Lord Brook, whose monument records that he was servant to Queen Elisabeth, councillor to King James, and friend to Sir Philip Sidney.

On this Lord Brook King James bestowed the castle of Warwick, then a dilapidated ruin, which had been used as a county prison. Fulk rebuilt the place almost from its foundation, and made it one of the grand houses of the period. The son of this servant and councillor of Princes struck out a new line for himself, being one of the most active on the Parliamentary side in the beginning of the civil wars. This Lord Brook raised the militia of Warwick, and led them in arms to join the Earl of Essex, who was marching towards London from Worcester, with the intention of intercepting the King's forces, who had moved from Shrewsbury with the same objective before him.

Charles had reached Banbury, in Oxfordshire, before he had news of Essex's advance, and there the royal forces were halted, and changed front. Essex meantime had reached Kington, or Kingeton—

supposed to be from King's Town, and there is a King John's Well in the neighbourhood to give countenance to the derivation—and between the two camps lay the breezy heights of Edgehill, whose ridge commands a fine uninterrupted range of these midland regions.

On the King's march to Banbury a little incident occurred which, variously related by Walpole, Macaulay, and others, gives a graphic touch to our impressions of those days of civil wars. As the King marched to Edgcot, near Banbury, on the 22nd of October, 1642, he saw a person hunting in the fields not far from Shuckleburgh, with a good pack of hounds in merry cry. Upon which the King fetched a deep sigh, and asked who that gentleman might be that hunted so merrily that morning, when he was going to fight for his crown. The merry hunter was the Squire of Shuckleburgh, who, brought before the King, was so overcome and inspired by his majesty's friendly and yet melancholy chiding that he immediately went home, armed all his tenants, and joined the King at Edgehill on the following day.

The commanding heights of Edgehill have no doubt been the scene of sanguinary struggles of which no history has come down to us. One such battle is recorded in means more lasting than brass or marble, in the shape of a horse cut out of the turf on a sloping hill-side; and known as the Red Horse, from the red sandstone which gives its prevailing colour to the soil, and will suggest a similar monument on the Berkshire hills. The same custom of scouring the horse at prescribed intervals of years was observed at both places.

Charles's forces must have had the red horse of Tysoe Vale in full view as they toiled up the troublesome ascent of Edgehill. The King had resolved to begin the attack, but no enemy was found to dispute the ridge, but among the fields at the foot of the hills, in the country that lay before them, in the calm of a quiet autumnal Sunday morning, there gleamed occasional flashes as the sun touched the steel of pike-heads or glanced upon a polished corselet. The enemy was below in force, and the first serious blow in the civil war was about to be struck. The King's men came cheering down the hill, and the Parliament men were ready to receive them at the foot. There were perhaps ten thousand men on each side, few of whom had before shared in actual shock of battle. All was

uncertainty and suspense on either side, when Prince Rupert with his horsemen attacked furiously, and drove the Parliamentary cavalry in headlong flight before him. The right wing of the Parliamentary army, consisting of Lord Brook's sturdy Warwickshire militia, was also thrown into disorder, and the day seemed already won for the King, when the royal centre, making sure of victory, rushed forward in disorder, and were met by a solid phalanx of pikemen under Sir William Balfour, who made great slaughter among the King's men. The Earl of Lindsey was mortally wounded, and Sir Edward Verney, the standard-bearer, was killed, and the royal standard taken, but afterwards recovered. The battle began at noon, and continued till dusk, when either side remained on the field, and both claimed the victory. Essex, however, first withdrew, and retired to Warwick, while Charles marched back to Banbury.

Not far from Edgehill lies Compton Winyates—which some read as Vineyard—the seat of the Compton family, Earls of Northampton. At Edgehill battle the Earl of Northampton fought for the King—a zealous Cavalier, who had pitted himself against Lord Brook, and had striven to bring Warwickshire over to the royal cause with but little effect. The Earl was killed at Hopton Heath in the year following. The old house at Compton was built, it is said, of the brick and stone from Fulbrook Castle, that was raised by the stout Duke of Bedford, famous in the French wars of the fifteenth century.

Long Compton, which is close to the Gloucestershire border, is to be noticed as the scene of a strange monkish legend, recorded by Dagdale, which is not without interest. It seems that once upon a time the parish was visited by St. Augustine, a circumstance probable enough in itself, as he was actually in the neighbourhood on his way to a conference with the Welsh bishops in the neighbouring marches. Already, it seems, a Christian congregation existed at Compton, the priest of which had a serious dispute with a Saxon knight, who refused to pay tithe, and who was in consequence excommunicated. The people thronged the church to hear the holy man from Rome, but before commencing the office of the mass, St. Augustine stood forth and proclaimed that all excommunicated persons should quit the church before the mass was said. Thereupon a man burst from his grave, that was within the church,

and walked forth. The saint continued the office unmoved, but at its conclusion he marched out at the head of the awe-struck parishioners, and questioned the dead man as to the cause of his extraordinary conduct. He had been excommunicated some hundreds of years ago, it seemed, and for not paying tithe, and upon that St. Augustine summoned the priest who had excommunicated him, a venerable priest of the British nation, who rose from his grave to answer the saint's appeal. St. Augustine was no friend to the British clergy, who were fearfully astray on the matter of keeping Easter and the tonsure, and who hardly recognised his authority. But on this question of tithe he was one with them. Still, the old British chief had suffered, no doubt, and upon his submission and confession the saint absolved him, and he returned thankfully to his tomb. The British priest asked nothing better than to be left to his repose, and the incident ended with the conversion of the Saxon knight, and the due collection of the tithe. For a certain boldness of outline in this legend the monk who chronicles it feels it necessary to account. For never, he writes, would the hard-headed—meaning pig-headed—English have become Christians but for such miracles as these. But the legend has another kind of interest, for the chronicler assumes the existence of an uninterrupted Christian worship here from the days of the early British church.

There now only remains to visit the birthplace of Shakespeare, and his tomb at Stratford-upon-Avon, a place of pilgrimage for all the world. A visit to the grand old church, with the river flowing by its graveyard, gives us a more vivid impression of the man Shakespeare than can be obtained from any amount of reading. The half-figure of the poet looking out with bright tranquility from its niche in the chancel wall, carries conviction of its truth and faithfulness to nature at the first glance. And it is a sensation never to be forgotten to stand upon the very spot where lie the bones of the great dramatist, and to read :

Good friend, for Jesu's sake forbear
To digg the dust enclosed heere,
Blest be ye man yt spares thes stones,
And curst be he yt moves my bones.

FREE LODGINGS IN PARIS.

How many people die of hunger every year in Paris? More, probably, in proportion to the population than in London.

reckoning, that is, those who do not wait for the end but leap into the Seine and are found next morning on the wet slabs of the Morgue. The French are not so much given as we are to talking of these things. In the Crimean War "our correspondent" (who then sprang into full-fledged existence) chronicled every frost-bite and every case of insufficient rations. How the French got on no one but their Government ever knew for certain, though sometimes (as, for instance, when the Dobrudscha fever caught them) their sufferings must have been heavier than ours.

There must be many more cases of starvation in Paris than in London, for in Paris there are more people who wake every morning without the least idea how they shall get through the day. There are no workhouses, and therefore no casual wards; and at the bureaux de bienfaisance the enquiries are too strict for those whose antecedents won't bear examination. They get through the day—the men, for Heaven knows what becomes of the women—if it is wet by sitting about in the sale-rooms, or going into the churches, where, of course, there is a little begging to be done; or attending the public meetings, where they may perhaps earn a few sous by hissing or cheering. If it is fine there are the quays, and it is astonishing how long a Frenchman can cheat the pangs of hunger by watching other Frenchmen fish. But at night, what becomes of the chevaliers d'industrie whose industry has wholly failed them? Some of them, we know, prowls about seeking whom they may devour; hiding in quarries or among limekilns when the police are troublesome; managing now and then to plunder some belated foot-passenger and throw him into the river. But these are the "dangerous class," the fellows whom Eugene Sue painted years ago in the *Mystères de Paris*, and whose manners M. Zola finds so interesting nowadays. There are a great many who are not dangerous yet, and some who never could become so; and, till 1878, there was actually no place in all Paris where they could get a night's lodging. A few used to get an uncertain shelter in hackney-coaches whose kind-hearted drivers would let them in till they picked up a fare. A very few had scraped acquaintance with some gentleman's coachman and got an occasional bed in the stable. But for the mass of them—workmen amongst them who had had a quarrel with their employers, and whose *livret* was therefore not

satisfactory—there was nothing but the streets.

It was not always so. The old Revolution, inaugurating the reign of equality and fraternity, suppressed the two night-refuges (one for each sex), which had lasted from the twelfth century. That for men provided sleeping-room for two hundred. It was a religious foundation, of course, under the hospitalières of St. Augustine. Being religious it was, of course, secularised; and being endowed, its revenues were swallowed up in that deepest abyss of jobbery which the world has ever seen, the public purse of the Directory. The building (a re-build of the seventeenth century) lasted till 1818. The *Intermédiaire* (a sort of Paris Anti-quarian) lately published the inscription which might be read till the place was pulled down, and the *Blanc-Manteaux* (Whitefriars) market built on its room. It ran thus in strange old French: "L'Hospital de Saint Anastase dit Saints Gervais ou les pauvres et rangers en passant par cet ville sont resus a loger et coucher pour trois nuits. Les personnes charitables pouron y contribuer de leurs aumones pour ayder a y subvenir." The women's refuge, with seventy-nine beds, was the Hospital of St. Catherine and St. Opportuna. The nuns were called *Catherinettes*; they fed at the same table with their poor guests, and they also had to bury dead prisoners and unclaimed bodies that had been exposed at the Morgue. The Revolution ate up their endowment also. "Night-refuges foster idleness and vagabondage; therefore their revenues shall be given to hospitals." There was an excuse for this: the hospitals were indeed in a wretched state. In the wholesale confiscation of Church property their revenues had been sadly cut down. Assignats lowered the value of what little had been saved: and a hospital is far more a necessity of life to a great city than a night-refuge. For some time after "The Year Three," the "central administration of the hospitals" was as badly arranged as anything else in the Republic. Of course, during the First Empire there was plenty to think of besides looking after the homeless poor. When peace came, one wonders the French did not go in for a poor law; but they preferred periodical revolutions to what we, since Elizabeth's reign, have accepted as a necessary evil. They contented themselves with stringent rules against begging—who has not seen the notice at the entrance of village or country town: "La mendicité est interdite dans

ce lieu"—and by opening the bureaux, which are invaluable to poor people of stainless character, but which do not really meet all the improvable cases. Nor are the doles from convents of any great use for this class. Charitable ladies have their own poor whom they look after, and so have sisterhoods and brotherhoods; but a great many of the deserving poor would think themselves degraded by accepting such help.

The existing night-refuges—three for men, making up five hundred beds, and two for women—are wholly unsectarian, the former managed by laymen. But lay nurses have turned out such a failure that the sisters have been let in again. They, at any rate, do not mistake draughts for embrocations, or leave babies lying for hours without any covering.

Till 1878, when the first of the men's refuges was opened (that for women was started the year after), the associations that devoted themselves to the chance poor were strictly religious. There were the *Petites Sœurs*, who began in 1842; the *Sœurs Aveugles de St. Paul*, dating from 1853; the *Dames du Calvaire*, from 1874. It was Count Amedée des Cars, of a very old noble family, a thorough society man, a member of the Jockey Club, son of an officer who had highly distinguished himself in the old Algiers war, who first took in hand the re-establishment of a night-refuge. The thing had been done at Marseilles in the *Canébière* some years before, by M. Massabo. His institution served as a model, and several charitable men, such as Dutpoy, the banker, Leturc, etc., helped.

The first thing was to get a license. You must do that in Paris before you can take lodgers, and in the eye of the law the refuge would be a lodging-house. Happily, the chief of the first division of police was M. Lecour, author of *La Charité à Paris*; and he smoothed the way for a work which was just after his own heart.* The old farmhouse of Monceaux, not pulled down, though a mass of houses had grown up all around, was easily fitted up with twenty beds, which were in a day or two, as applicants crowded in, increased to forty. The great shops sent presents of bedding, etc.; the Courcelles Washing Company offered to

* M. Lecour has since resigned, disgusted at the way in which the municipality has been going in for persecution. He did not like to be the instrument in closing orphanages and other good works because Sisters or Brothers managed them.

take the washing free of cost; a doctor volunteered to prescribe; a chemist to give the medicines. Subscriptions came in. An eccentric old man, M. de Lamaze, then dying at Amélie les Bains, gave them one thousand five hundred francs towards a second house—a big warehouse on the Boulevard Vaugirard, of which the great bookseller Hachette had a lease valued at two thousand six hundred francs. Hachette accepted one thousand five hundred, and so they were allowed to take possession at once, and as M. de Lamaze gave them one hundred thousand francs for fitting up and furnishing, and put them down in his will for a hundred and eleven thousand two hundred more, they called the place after his name. The winter of 1879, unusually severe, had called out a great deal of temporary help. The *Figaro*, for instance, besides a soup-kitchen, had set up a night-home. When warm weather came, all the *Figaro's* bedding and pots and pans were handed to Count des Cars and his committee. One of the managers looks in every night at one of the refuges; they take it in turn like poor-law guardians. The responsible overseers are half-pay captains, a class supposed to combine rough-and-ready tenderness with power of keeping order. At seven the doors open, and none are admitted, save in exceptional cases, after nine. The incomer is not searched as in our workhouses. He walks up to the overseer's desk, gives his name, hands in his papers, and tells what he pleases of his history, showing his "livret" if he have one. If not, the committee will provide him with one, and so enable him to make "a new departure." Then he gets his sleeping-ticket, and a ticket for a bath, which is so much appreciated, that a good many come in, take their bath, and then walk off. If he is very hard up, he whispers something in the captain's ears, and gets a ticket for soup or for a hunch of bread. Last year the committee gave out thirty-seven thousand bed-tickets, very nearly thirty thousand bread-tickets, and eighteen thousand seven hundred soup-tickets. All the fittings are of the simplest, the bedsteads iron, the mattresses stuffed with seaweed—so, for that matter, is a good deal of the over-cheap showy London furniture—the soap in the bath-room is a semi-liquid paste—solid soap used to be stolen. There is a library, and those who want to write are provided with pens, ink, and paper, and their letters are stamped for them and sent to the post. They are not read first; and

M. Maxime de Camp, the well-known sociologist, who has published an interesting account of these refuges, says you can at once spot an old gaol-bird, for, when he has written his letter, he is sure to bring it up open. A very necessary department is the "pouaillerie," which we may euphemise into "disinfecting-room." Here the clothes are baked to free them from vermin, while the wearers are abed. At nine in comes the visitor for the evening, says a few words on the duty of hard work and resignation and struggling against difficulties, and says the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary, premising that those who do not care to join in, are not in the least bound to do so, because the committee is especially anxious to discourage hypocrisy. Almost everybody stands up and responds—M. du Camp cannot tell whether simply out of courtesy or because the words come back to them like an echo of childhood. In the morning they are turned out; the rule being that no one is admitted for more than three consecutive nights, and that three months must have elapsed since the last admission. This rule is, however, relaxed in the case of really deserving workmen seeking employment.

A vast number of these, mostly countrymen, are always wandering about Paris. Some of the cases are very sad. One poor young fellow from Luxemburg, we are told, had passed his B.A. with great éclat at his native university. He knew four languages, and Paris seemed just the place to bring his talents to. But he had been for months seeking a situation, and was starving when he heard of the refuge.

A very different case was that of a bleary-eyed fellow with greasy ringlets and several rings, seemingly gold, on his dirty fingers. He had been in prison as a vagrant beggar, and had come out the day before with thirty-nine francs, his prison earnings. Now he hadn't a farthing. "J'ai fait la noce," was his explanation. "I had a spree, and what else could I do after seven months of beans and water?"

Another frequent type is the Paris shop-boy. A vintner's man, who got three francs a day, struck for an extra ten sous, and had been ever so long out of work. "Would you take a job now at two and a half francs?" "No." "Why?" "What would the others say?" A question which, says M. du Camp, involves the secret of all strikes.

The refuge takes in men of all nations. Next to French, Belgians come the oftenest,

then Germans, then Swiss. The strange thing is they get very few old men ; let us hope the old are provided for at home, or in almshouses. Sometimes a man's clothes will fall to pieces in the "pouaillerie"; hence the committee are grateful for gifts of cast-off garments. Shoes they are obliged to have made—the foot of the average tramp is so much bigger than that of the man who gives away still serviceable shoes.

The help they furnish is not only valuable as giving a chance to the honest workman, but also because it keeps off the streets those who might else take to crime if they were left to sleep in the streets. And the institution is popular with all classes. The subscriptions range from fifteen hundred francs to fifty centimes. An engine-man sends six stamps; a workman's family, after reading about it in the *Petit Journal*, sends ten. This spring, Meissonnier, as everybody knows, has celebrated his jubilee by exhibiting his pictures. Of his receipts, a fifth is to be given to the poor of Poissy, the rest is to go to the refugees' committee. They expect to realise enough to build a fourth house, to be called after the great painter. The women's *Hospitalité de Nuit* is worked by that *Société Philanthropique* which was founded in 1780 to take charge of sick children. Louis the Sixteenth gave it five hundred francs a month; but, along with other like works, it came to an end when the monarchy was overthrown. In "The Year Eight," however, it was set up again, and added to its children's hospital a soup-kitchen in which were made the soups of that famous American, Benjamin Thompson, who married Lavoisier's widow, and got a title as Count Rumford. Its soup-kitchens are on a vast scale; last year more than two and one-third million platefuls were given away. Its children's dispensary (only founded last year, and valuable because it is down among the workpeople in the *Rue de la Crimée*, from which the regular children's hospitals are far away) is managed by the *Dames du Calvaire*. "By raising the standard of children's health," says M. du Camp, "no doubt it keeps down drunkenness, so largely due to the craving that comes from want of stamina."

Of the value of its women's night refuge here is an instance which does not tell very well for the goodness of heart of French keepers of young ladies' seminaries. One night a girl rushed into the refuge in the *Rue St. Jacques*, up

in the Latin quarter, crying: "Save me!" She was a teacher in a suburban school, where she only got her board and lodging; and as there was a week's holiday at Carnival, the mistress had sent her adrift to save her food. Knowing nothing of Paris, and with only twelve francs in her pocket, she had alighted at a little students' hotel; and had no sooner got to her room than a party of young roysterers, who had seen a pretty girl go upstairs, began hammering at the door. She rushed out into the street, and was guided by a policeman to the refuge, which was fortunately close by.

One is comforted to think that there is so much charity in Paris. A great deal of it is necessarily in the hands of priests and nuns, for France is, after all, still a Catholic country. But people like the philanthropic Madame Hottinguer of the Delessert family are certainly no bigots, any more than our own Miss de Broen, whose Belleville mission is doing so much. Neither are men like Abbés Bayle and Roussel, who to their orphanages couple on agricultural colonies, and who are always urging that in the landes of Brittany and Berri there is room to teach farming to all the orphans in all France.

Priests and Jesuits do always demand a confession of faith before doing a kindness. There are well-authenticated instances of Communard chiefs, hunted by the Versailles troops, being kept in hiding in churches.

The truth in regard to philanthropy seems to be that our human nature, being selfish, needs a motive, and of all motives, faith is the most energetic. Breadth is all very well; but, as with water, if you want it to do hard work you pen it up between narrow banks, so with human energy; to be effectual, it must in nine cases out of ten be narrow. The tenth case is that of the man of world-wide sympathies, whose all-embracing activity does not spend itself in talk.

"Help people to help themselves" is the motto of all these refuges and other like good works. "Sometimes a hand held out at the right moment is enough to save a life," and that without any interference with "the survival of the fittest;" for in the ups and downs of this modern life of ours, "the fittest" often get crushed by a blow that they could not be on their guard against.

In regard to Paris refuges the only thing we need to copy is the personal inspection

by the committee; it is like Oxford, and Cambridge, and Eton coming down (not only sending alms) to the East End. And it is done regularly.

AFTER THE RAIN.

ALL day the wild nor'-easter had swept across the plain;

All day against the lattice had plashed the driving rain.

And every budding flower, and every blade of grass,

Had owned the wild March weather, and bowed to let it pass.

Dull morn and joyless noontide, had worn themselves away,

The sun sank sullen to the west, behind a shroud of grey.

Sudden the great clouds parted, like a yawning cavern's mouth,

Soft and tender gleamed the light, the wind blew from the south;

And every drooping blossom raised her fair rain-washed head,

The primrose glimmered 'mid her leaves, the violet in her bed;

Catching the golden radiance, out blazed the daffodil,

And from the greening hedgerows the sparrows twittered shrill;

And where a woman waited, her eyes flashed back the light,

And with a happy smile she said, "My love will come to-night."

ACQUAINTANCES.

A STORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE scene is Avranches, the time evening. Two men are sitting in the public gardens listening to the band, which is practising for the forthcoming fête. But neither of them seems to have more than a cursory attention to give to Auber's overture.

"Is it a genuine case this time, Ernest?" said the younger one.

"Why say this time? Have I ever owned to a genuine case before?"

"No," replied Charles, "I can't say you have. It's unfortunate that the first time it is genuine there are difficulties in the way."

"There is an English proverb about that," said Ernest: "'True love never runs smooth,' or something to that effect. Fate is against me, and always has been."

"My dear fellow, that is doing fate an injustice. You have had plenty of successes—more than your share."

"It is that I complain of," said Ernest.

"Had I been accustomed to disappointments, I might bear this one. I have had

successes, when I have not cared a straw whether I succeeded or not; now that it is a matter of life and death, I am doomed to have my wish unfulfilled."

Charles gave a light laugh.

"My dear boy, do you call a woman's love a matter of life and death?"

"It often has been," was Ernest's reply.

"Often to the woman than the man."

"Because it is the woman who is most often the disappointed one. In this case it is the man."

"But, even supposing that fate is against you for once, is it wise to stake happiness on one thing?"

Ernest shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear Charles, it is easy for you to be philosophical. You do not love Suzanne."

"I will if you wish," retorted Charles lightly.

"Let us go back to the hotel," said Ernest shortly.

Charles put his hand on his arm.

"Forgive me; I spoke stupidly; I can feel for you though I talk lightly. Is there anything I can do to show my sympathy?"

"Yes," said Ernest. "Let us get away from here; that band is too loud, and the people are getting thicker every minute."

He took his friend's arm, and they wandered slowly down the road that leads to the sands.

There was no one to interrupt them; the only passers-by were tired labourers on their way home, or an occasional carriage full of tourists being dragged up the hill by the weary horses.

"I will tell you what you can do for me," said Ernest, speaking gravely and earnestly; "I want a friend now, more than ever I have done before. I mean to see if you are one."

"You may take it for granted," was Charles's reply.

"I will. Suzanne, as you know, loves me; I love Suzanne more than life. Do you know why I cannot marry her?"

"I've never heard the whole story. She was betrothed before you stepped in, was she not?"

"No; this is the truth about it. Three years ago my elder brother, who was an officer, quarrelled with her father. There is no doubt whatever that my brother was in the right; the quarrel was forced on him. A duel followed, and Suzanne's father was killed."

"I never heard of that," said Charles in surprise.

"No ; it was hushed up, and my brother went to Algiers, where he died last year. Scarcely anyone knows the real cause of M. Devrière's death. You can easily imagine the two families saw little of each other afterwards. It happened, however, that Suzanne and I met in Paris ; she was ignorant of the whole story. I was loth to act as if there were any cause why we should not meet on friendly terms, the more so as I was greatly charmed with her. In a week the mischief was done. I was in love with her and could not leave her."

"And she ?"

"I was not indifferent to her. But her aunt came on the scene, saw what was going on, and demanded an interview with me. I granted it, of course. She told me that either I must break off all intercourse with Suzanne, or tell her the whole story. I naturally refused to do either. The result was that she told Suzanne herself."

"Why could she not hold her tongue ?" asked Charles angrily. "It was no good to spoil more lives."

"She was the dead man's sister. I cannot blame her. She told Suzanne, and ordered her never to see me again. But we had one more interview. I spent the most terrible hour of my life then."

Charles said nothing ; Ernest recovered his calm, which he had for a moment lost.

"She confessed her love for me, but refused to marry me. Her aunt threatened that if she ever saw me again the whole world should know she was going to marry the brother of the man who killed her father. She could not face that."

"Poor girl !" murmured Charles.

"I don't blame her," continued Ernest. "It would be a terrible thing to do. So we have separated."

"Do you think her aunt meant to carry out her threat ?"

"I am certain of it. I left Paris the day after I saw Suzanne ; a week later I heard that she was betrothed to M. Courtin. I know she detests him ; she has often told me so. They are to be married next Monday."

"There is then no hope for you ?"

"I suppose not," was the sad reply ; "yet there is always a chance. She may be braver than she imagines. I shall not despair finally till she is married. If she breaks it off I shall know the reason, and nothing shall separate us then."

"What is it that you wish me to do for you ?" asked Charles, bringing the conversation round to practical matters.

"This," said Ernest. "I start to-morrow for England. I cannot stay here, I must travel, do something to try and get rid of the horrible monotony of my ordinary existence. I want you to send me word directly the marriage is over, or, better still, will you put an advertisement in the English Times ? There is a column for that sort of advertisement. Berthin can tell you all about getting it in. Put it ambiguously, so that no one but I can tell what it means. Wherever I may be I shall be able to get a copy of the Times, I should think—especially if I keep where I can get one," he added with a smile.

"That is more in your old style," said his companion. "Do try and pull yourself together ; it's a bitter pill, but all isn't lost because you fail for once in your life."

"You are talking about what you don't understand," was Ernest's reply. "Let us get back."

There was very little conversation during the walk home, but when they were once more at the hotel, seated on a bench outside the salon, enjoying cigars and coffee, Charles took up the talk at the point at which it had been dropped.

"Can't you make up your mind definitely where you are going ?" he asked. "If you will, I will try and run over myself and bring you the news, and then, perhaps, we can see something of England together."

"You are very kind, Charles, but I won't trespass on your kindness to that extent. I shall not be the sort of companion any man could stand. Besides, I really don't know where I am going."

"But how about your business ? Aren't you going to have your letters forwarded ?"

"No."

"Will no one know your address ?"

"My dear Charles, if I don't tell you, do you think it probable I shall tell any one else ?"

Charles saw it was no use to press the point ; he acquiesced with a shrug.

"And now, my dear fellow," said Ernest in a lighter tone, "let's have a game of billiards. I've bored you enough for one evening. Come indoors, and I'll promise you that you shan't have to complain of me any more to-night."

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning Charles rose at nine and came down to the coffee-room to have his cup of coffee and roll. His friend was not there, but at that he was scarcely

surprised, for they had sat up late the previous night.

"I half hope he won't take this mad journey after all," said Charles to himself; "he was all right last night after we came in—quite his old self again."

However, Ernest did not come down, and Charles finished his breakfast alone. Just as he had finished a waiter brought him a note. It was from Ernest.

"DEAR CHARLES,—I am off for England. Don't forget your promise.—Yours,
"ERNEST."

Charles was thunderstruck. But there was nothing to be done; he found that Ernest had started early in the morning, taking a carriage in order not to have to wait for the diligence to Pontorson. There was nothing for Charles to do but pack up his things and prepare to return to Paris; his little holiday had come to an untimely end.

Meanwhile Ernest Dumont was approaching Pontorson, where he intended taking the diligence. His only luggage consisted of a small valise. He was silent during the journey, to the great satisfaction of his blue-bloused driver, who was taciturnity itself. He neither demanded a *pourboire* nor gave any thanks when he received one.

Although Ernest had time enough on his hands, he yet was feverishly anxious to get to his destination, though he only vaguely knew what that destination was. The great thing was to get out of France. It would be easier to endure his anxiety when far away.

The boats and trains fitted well, and the same day that saw him leave Avranches saw him safely installed in a quiet hotel near Charing Cross. He entered his name as Eugène Dubois.

Once alone he entirely belied the assumed gaiety which he had shown when last with his friend. He threw himself into a chair and seemed utterly and entirely miserable.

Now that he was far from all his friends he began to feel the want of them. He had voluntarily expatriated himself; he had intentionally cut himself clear from all his old ties. Not a soul on earth knew where he was. Few, he thought sadly enough, would care. He was alone; it had been his wish to be so for weeks past, and now that his wish was fulfilled he was more miserable than ever.

However, he had enough sense left to know that the only way to prevent time

from dragging along interminably was to occupy himself. He had only been in London once before; suppose he were to have a solitary ramble? Surely in so busy a city there must be something to distract his thoughts.

He took his hat and passed out to the landing. Half unconsciously he began to descend the stairs. Not watching his foot steps carefully enough he thought he had reached the landing when there was another stair; the consequence was that he fell head foremost into the arms of an Englishman who was ascending.

The shock carried them both over, and Ernest received a hard blow on the head in the fall. He was half stunned for a minute; when he recovered his senses completely he found he was in the stranger's room.

"Hope you're all right!" said the Englishman.

"Thank you, yes; a little dizzy, that's all."

"Confoundedly dark staircase," said the other, pouring out some brandy and offering it to him; "it's a wonder people don't break their necks."

Both men were full of apologies, for each had been careless. The Englishman, whose name was Seymour, saw at a glance that Ernest was French, and as he knew the language well, he used it. Ernest was more glad than he would confess to find a sort of compatriot in the first man he had addressed on equal terms since crossing.

The two men chatted for some minutes, till Ernest said he had no further excuse for trespassing on the other's kindness, as he was quite recovered. However, they found they were both going out, so they left the hotel together.

The streets were crowded, and conversation was difficult. To add to their discomfort it began to rain. They discovered that neither had any fixed object for his stroll, so they adjourned to a café for a little shelter and a chat.

They talked for some time; each was in need of a companion. Seymour was on a visit to London from the north on business; Ernest wanted something to keep his thoughts away from himself. He was afraid to be alone now that he had come so far to be so.

The rain ceased, the clouds parted, and a white moon made the wet roofs and pavements glisten with a magical light. It was an enchanting scene, and the young men felt its beauty. There was no need

for them to hurry home, so they strolled along the silent Embankment arm-in-arm. At last twelve o'clock struck, and they mounted the steps by Waterloo Bridge preparatory to returning to the hotel.

"Come on the bridge, and see the moon and the lights in the water," said Seymour. "It's a wonderful sight."

They strolled on to the massive bridge, deserted except for an occasional passenger or a late cab. As they passed one of the recesses, Seymour noticed a man leaning over the parapet.

He was quite still, gazing at the water intently. Seymour did not feel comfortable when looking at him, but did not consider himself justified in speaking to him. When he had passed him he looked round to see if he were still as motionless as before. To Ernest's surprise his companion leapt from his side and rushed to the recess. He was too late. The man was gone. A dull splash in the dark waters below told what had become of him.

In horror Seymour raised a cry for help. Fortunately it was at hand; a police-boat was passing, and the wretched would-be suicide was rescued and brought to land.

When he was in safety Seymour returned to his companion, who had watched the scene with peculiar interest.

"Let us get back," said Seymour; "that horrible affair has upset me."

"Is that the way you manage these matters in England?" asked Ernest.

"I'm sorry to say that isn't the first fool who has jumped off Waterloo Bridge, and I'm afraid it won't be the last. Don't imagine, though, that as a nation we are given to that sort of thing."

"I hope not, at all events in that way," said the Frenchman. "It is ridiculous, or would be so, if there were not a touch of tragedy in it. Why did he throw himself into the water, when there are so many ways out of existence?"

"Perhaps he half hoped he might be saved, after all."

"He had his wish, in that case," replied Ernest. "What will become of him now?"

"I suppose he will go before a magistrate. The police have him in charge."

Ernest smiled.

"A romantic ending to a terrible story, is it not? We manage these things, at all events, better in France. I heard of a case the other day: A lover lost his mistress; he opened a vein in his arm, and died quietly during the night, without a soul

being any the wiser. You say we are a theatrical nation, yet it is you who throw yourselves off bridges, whilst we——"

"For Heaven's sake, man, do stop your horrible stories! Let us get on to some pleasanter subject than that of leaving this world."

"As you wish. Here we are at our hotel. Will you come up to my room for an hour? I won't talk of suicides, I promise you."

Seymour was anything but inclined for bed after his recent adventure, so gladly accepted.

Ernest sent for some refreshment, and it was past three before they separated, each delighted at having found a pleasant companion.

During the next three days they saw a great deal of each other. Seymour discovered that there was some mystery about his new acquaintance. He had apparently no object in being in London, had no friends, did not care an atom about the sights. Besides this, he had occasional fits of intense melancholy, and was often feverishly anxious for time to pass.

Nevertheless, he was generally an agreeable companion, and at his worst he was an interesting study. Seymour spent as much time as he could with him, especially in the evening. They seldom parted till the small hours.

One morning a small nephew of Seymour's came to see him, and greatly amused the two friends by his precocious ways. Ernest seemed to brighten more than he had done before, and laughed outright once at the youngster's grief at the fact that his father would not give him a watch yet. Seymour was delighted to see the melancholy Frenchman with so much life in him.

Next day, however, all gaiety had disappeared. He was feverishly anxious. It was Tuesday. He had gone out before breakfast to buy the Times.

There was nothing in it to interest him. He threw away the copy as soon as he had glanced down the column which was to contain the advertisement from his friend Charles.

That evening Seymour could do nothing with him. As a last resource he suggested a game of cards. Ernest instantly accepted, and urged high play; Seymour acquiesced against his will. Finally the Englishman lost a few pounds, which Ernest refused to accept. He had only played for the excitement. Seymour, however, naturally insisted on paying his losses.

Although they sat up late, Seymour could hear Ernest pacing up and down his room long after they parted. Their rooms were adjacent. Ernest did not go to bed that night.

By daylight he was in the street. He knew now where to get an early copy of the Times. His first glance told him all Suzanne was married.

He crushed the paper in his hand. For a minute or two he stood motionless, then with a start he began walking to the hotel.

There was nothing remarkable about him when he came down to breakfast in the coffee-room, unless a quieter demeanour than usual might be deemed so. He spoke to Seymour when he entered, and hoped he did not disturb him by his early rising. Seymour did not know he had risen.

"Yes; I went out for a stroll—to Waterloo Bridge. By-the-bye, I hope you will let me give you your revenge this evening; that little game last night pulled me together wonderfully. I've been feverish the last few days."

"I'm not anxious for my revenge," said Seymour; "I don't often play."

"Nor I, and I am never comfortable until I lose. You will do me a favour if you will give me the chance. It calms my brain; it's as good as medicine to me."

Seymour laughed and promised. He saw nothing of Ernest the whole day, but they had appointed to meet at ten o'clock.

Ernest spent the afternoon in going through his possessions. He had nothing with him to declare his identity. His linen was only marked with initials, which stood equally well for his real and assumed names. The few letters in his pockets he tore up, with one exception.

This was in a lady's hand. He read it through slowly and carefully, kissed it, and then burnt it to ashes. He then wrote a couple of letters, which occupied him till his visitor was due.

At ten o'clock Seymour arrived. Ernest welcomed him more gaily than usual.

"Have you seen little Tom to-day?" he asked.

"No; I'm going to see him to-morrow."

"Will you give him a little present from me? He wants a watch—do you think this will do for him?"

He held out his gold timepiece with a chain attached. Seymour looked up in astonishment.

"You won't accept it for him? You must! I will not keep it. It was given

me by a man who has just tried to kill my best friend in a duel; if you won't take it for little Tommy, I will smash it with my boot, and then drop it into the river. Will you take it?"

Seymour made some ineffectual protests, but at last was forced to take it. He made up his mind, however, that his possession of it should only be temporary; the whole affair was absurd.

They began to play. Ernest had the luck at first, but it soon turned. Seymour won, and by midnight had more than recouped himself. In another hour he refused to play any more; he calculated he had won over twenty pounds.

"You won't go on?" asked Ernest. "Then I must fulfil my duty; I am a good loser, you see."

He handed over notes and gold, amounting to over forty pounds. The money included several napoleons.

"I have not won all this," said Seymour. "You have made a mistake."

"Oh no; we were playing for the same stakes as last night."

"I did not understand that."

"But I did; and as I lost, it is for me to decide. You taught me last evening to insist on paying my losses."

Seymour protested; but Ernest insisted. Seymour resolved to lose it to him again at the first opportunity.

Three o'clock struck as they parted. Seymour crept quietly back to his room, tired out, as he had had a hard day. He determined to have a good night's rest.

Ernest did not come down to breakfast next morning. Seymour waited about some time, hoping to see him, and at last told the waiter to go and call him as it was nearly eleven.

The man was some time in returning. Obtaining no answer to his knock he had opened the door to take in the hot water which was standing outside. On the bed he saw the Frenchman lying, his throat cut.

The waiter was a man of sense. He locked the door on the outside, put the key in his pocket, and went to tell his master what he had found.

Before a single person in the hotel knew what had happened, a detective had the affair in his charge. The waiter told Seymour that Mr. Dubois was in bed, and would be able to see no one. Seymour was obliged to go out to keep a business appointment; when he returned in the evening, it was to find that he was arrested on the charge of murdering M. Dubois.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER the first shock of surprise and horror was over, Seymour began to recognise his position. He sent for a solicitor, with whom he was acquainted, and told him the whole story. Mr. Fuller listened attentively. Fortunately for Seymour's peace of mind, he was entirely convinced of his client's innocence, though he did not hold out many hopes of being able to prove it easily.

"Appearances are terribly against you," he said. "You are known to have been on intimate terms with Dubois. You are found to have his watch and his money; there was absolutely none found on him. Assuming that he was killed for his money, it is to you that suspicion must point."

Seymour groaned.

"I was afraid sometimes that he had something on his mind," he said. "I see now why he gave me the watch and made me win his money; he recognised that I had been kind to him, and wished that what he had of value might benefit me."

"I wish to goodness he had found some other way of doing it," said Mr. Fuller. "I'm afraid a jury will not see things in their real light. Does anyone know you played cards with him? If so that would help to account for your possession of the money, and we might suppose that he committed suicide because he lost so much to you."

Seymour was obliged to confess that no one had entered the room on either night that they played. Worse than that, it appeared that the waiter had seen him returning from Ernest's room on the night of his death, at three in the morning. The room in which they had played was a large one, with a bed in the corner, the rest of the room was furnished as a sitting-room.

Of course every care was taken to gather every particle of evidence in Seymour's favour. The razor was Ernest's—a small point, perhaps, but worth noting. Then there was no sign of a struggle. The natural answer to that was that Ernest was asleep. It unfortunately happened that there was not an atom of circumstantial evidence in the prisoner's favour which could not be met, whilst on the other hand were some of the most convincing facts that ever sent a man to the scaffold.

Perhaps the points on which Seymour's lawyers chiefly depended were his inexcusable conduct, supposing he were the

murderer; and the hope of discovering who the dead man really was. It was to the latter point that Mr. Fuller bent his attention.

Seymour had lived in France a considerable time, and had numerous friends in Paris. Some of these were written to, and as more than one had considerable influence in literary circles, paragraphs appeared in several journals detailing the mystery of the Frenchman's death. Advertisements were also inserted, which, it was hoped, would bring some result.

However, more than a week passed, and nothing happened. Ernest had but few relations, and as he was of a retiring disposition and reserved in his habits, they were not surprised at receiving no letters from him. Moreover, he had intimated his intention of passing a month in Normandy and Brittany, and that time was not yet up.

There was, however, one man who was on the look-out for news, and that was Charles. Unfortunately called to Germany the day after he had inserted the notice of Suzanne's marriage in the Times, he was, for more than a week, out of reach of French newspapers. The first that he saw on his return contained an account of Ernest's death.

He had not a moment's doubt that Dubois and Ernest were the same. If he had not jumped to that conclusion, a letter, which he found waiting for him on his return home, must have dispelled all doubt.

It was dated, but bore no address. The postmark was London. It ran thus:

"I must thank you for keeping your promise. Suzanne is married. She is dead to me, as she has shown that she wishes never to see me again.

"I have nothing now to live for. As you know, I have few near relations, and dislike those which I have. No one will regret my exit from this life, except, perhaps, you and two or three more. You will soon forget me. I am glad, however, to be able to do you a slight kindness. The enclosed paper will transfer to you my house in Paris.

"You see that my mind has been made up some time. I do not falter in the least. Before you receive this I shall be no more.

"I have not been so alone in London as I anticipated. I have made a friend. He has charmed me by his kindness. To-night we meet for the last time, though he does not know it. I have a plan for making him

easily console himself for losing an acquaintance of a few days' standing. From what he has told me, he will soon be married, and I fear his means are not too extensive. So, when we play écarté to-night, he will rise a winner of sufficient to pay for his honeymoon, at all events. This is not generosity on my part. Of what use is money to me?

"Good-bye, my dear Charles. You will understand me, if the others do not. We have often talked of life together; you know my thoughts, and though here they will attribute my action to insanity, you know it is the deed of a sane, hopeless man. Adieu!"

ERNEST."

Charles read the letter with mingled feelings. He did not, however, remain long without taking action. The paragraph in the paper stated that an innocent man had been charged with the murder of the unhappy suicide.

Charles knew little of English law, and for a moment feared that perhaps Justice had overtaken her victim already. He ran to the telegraph-office, and even wrote out a telegram before he recognised that he did not know where to send it.

Sooner than not dispatch it, he addressed it to the Chief of Police, promising to come to England to explain. It happened that he never glanced at the advertisement column of the paper, so that Mr. Fuller's appeal escaped his notice.

Thus it was that the first intimation that Seymour received of the possibility of proving his innocence was the entrance of Mr. Fuller with Ernest's letter to Charles in his hand.

The identity of the dead man with Ernest was easily established, the proof of Seymour's innocence was made abundantly clear. Before Charles returned to France he saw Seymour set at liberty.

One duty he had to perform before he left England, and that was to erect a memorial-stone to his friend. Far from home and friends rested the remains of an unhappy man, whose very generosity to others seemed fated to bring them misery instead of happiness.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XVIII. ACROSS THE CHANNEL.

THOUGH Lady Redcliff was not exactly the confidante that most girls would have chosen, there was no one else in the world to whom Theo could have told her story.

If circumstances had given her friends of her own age, this would have been still the same; the most sympathetic of them would not have been to Theo what her hard, ill-tempered, sarcastic, unloving old grandmother was. There was some strange mysterious link between them, and their frequent quarrels never ended in a real misunderstanding; through all difficulties they kept their respect for each other, and their odd, cold, mutual love. No one would have dreamed of expecting an affectionate word or a caress from Lady Redcliff; and Theo, with so much tenderness and softness in her nature, never even kissed her grandmother; yet that evening she had told her all that was in her heart, almost more than she knew herself, and when she felt ashamed of this confidence afterwards, and wished she had been wise, and hard, and strong about it all, there was still comfort in the thought that grandmother knew exactly what she meant, and would stand by her, whatever turn events might take in the future.

That was a very lonely spring. She did not wish to see Hugh, and did not see him. Helen wrote a short letter now and then, without a word of news in it. All the stir of the London season went on round Theo, she saw names of her cousins here and there in the Morning Post, but she was alone in the middle of it all.

At last one night she found herself at the hotel at Dover, with her grandmother in a terribly bad temper. Combe, Lady Redcliff's maid, Sparrow, and Jackson, the butler, were in attendance. Lady Redcliff had made up her mind suddenly to go abroad, and Theo had submitted to be carried off, without much feeling of pleasure or pain. She was glad to leave London, but she did not care at all for the idea of lakes, or mountains, or foreigners. There had been two or three weeks of tiring warm weather; it was now the end of April; but on the very day they left London it rained and blew in a tiresome, stormy manner, and Theo felt almost as cross as her grandmother, as she looked out from the Lord Warden on a muddy, unpleasant sea.

The next morning things looked a little brighter; the sun flashed out now and then through hurrying clouds driven by a strong north-west wind. Theo went out early with Combe, and walked about Dover. Combe was dismal; she hated hotels and travelling, and was angry with Lady Redcliff for starting off so suddenly, giving

one hardly time to pack, much less to get Miss Theo a proper travelling-dress.

"Don't be silly, Combe," said Theo as she grumbled on. "Any old clothes will do to travel in."

"I never could bear those foreign hotels," said Combe. "England is the place for me; and it's not only me; Mrs. Sparrow is of the same opinion, and she says her ladyship would be much better at home at her age, and with her uncertain health. She and me, we both have a feeling that this foreign trip will lead to no good, Miss Theo."

"You are both cowardly, and afraid of a little discomfort," said Theo. "Suppose I was going out to Africa as a missionary, which I think of doing some day, you wouldn't come with me, of course, Combe? After all, though," smiling rather drearily at herself, "a missionary with a lady's-maid wouldn't do, would it?"

"Miss Theo, if you went to tropic lands, or to the frozen ocean, there's nowhere I wouldn't follow; and you know that well," said Combe with tears in her eyes. "But I don't like to hear you joke on a serious subject, miss."

They had just reached the porch of the Lord Warden. Theo was smiling, partly at her own ideas, partly at Combe's protestations. Jackson was looking out for them with an anxious face; but before he could speak, a young man in a brown overcoat came out and met them face to face.

There were a few hurried, confused exclamations: "When did you come? Are you staying here?" and so on; but after the first moment Theo was conscious that Gerald Fane did not look half so happy, half so much pleased to see her, as that last day in the picture-gallery. Perhaps it was because poor Theo, for once, was hypocritically careless in her manner to him.

"If you please, miss," said Jackson, "her ladyship is waiting for you. She is quite ready to go on board."

"Going on board!" said Gerald, astonished.

"We are going to the lakes—to Baale first," said Theo. "Good-bye."

"Oh no—so am I." Theo thought he said that, but he was gone, and she hurried up at once to her grandmother's room.

Lady Redcliff was in a terrible fuss. She scolded Theo bitterly for running away to amuse herself, for taking Combe, and leaving all the bother before starting to her and that wretched, useless Sparrow.

"She and Jackson are two utterly in-

capable idiots," cried the old lady. "Bills to pay, bags to pack—they haven't got a head or a pair of hands between them. What did I bring you and Combe for, if it wasn't to make yourselves useful? I declare if we had not taken that ridiculous sleeping-carriage, I would go back to town by the next train just to punish you all. How can you be so selfish, Theo, so thoughtless!" She sat in an armchair, and went on scolding at the top of her voice.

Theo took no notice of her indignation.

"Are my things ready?" she said to Combe. "Help Sparrow, then," and she pointed to the floor, on which a few bags and boxes stood open, with Sparrow crying in the middle of them.

On the whole, it was not a promising beginning of their foreign tour. Theo bore it philosophically, however. She took command quietly, for Lady Redcliff's two servants really seemed to have lost their wits for the time. Afterwards she could not in the least remember what she had said or done, for her head was entirely full of something else; but there was something about Theo which brought the most hardened waiters and chambermaids to her feet; and by-and-by she took the whole party safely down to the boat, Lady Redcliff keeping up a modified scolding and grumbling the whole time.

"Give me your arm to go on board, Theo," she said. "Get away, Sparrow; you are worse than useless."

Theo turned her head by instinct at that moment, and found Gerald Fane standing close behind her. He was looking very grave, but, as their eyes met, she could not help smiling, and once more his face brightened all over at her glance.

Lady Redcliff, who was quickness itself, caught with astonishment the look in the handsome hazel eyes that were fixed on Theo. She took him in at once—a tall young man, slightly stooping at this moment, with an odd mixture in his face of boyish happiness and discontent, with a certain elegance, and yet no air of prosperity, but rather the reverse. It was a quick, nervous face, without much strength in it, perhaps, but also without the smallest touch of heaviness or stupidity.

"Who's that?" said Lady Redcliff.

"Mr. Fane, grandmamma," said Theo gently.

"I thought so. Will you give me your arm across these planks, Mr. Fane? I'm a nervous old woman, and I hate travelling."

Gerald instantly came forward, and took her on board with the greatest care. Theo followed, with a painful flush on her face.

Why should her grandmother have said, "I thought so!" What a thing to say! What would Mr. Fane understand by it?

This same thought may have struck Lady Redcliff herself, for as Gerald guided her along the deck she looked up at him and said:

"Do you know how I recognised you just now?"

"Did you? No, really I don't," said Gerald.

"I once knew some one of your name," said Lady Redcliff. "He must have been a relation, for you are the very image of him."

"My father, perhaps?"

"No—nor your grandfather. He never married, and died young. I can't talk in this crowd. Are you going on with us?"

"I believe so. At least, as far as Basle," said Gerald, glancing round to see if Theo was following.

She came up just then to the other side of her grandmother.

"You will go below, won't you?" she said. "It is cold on deck, and they say it is going to be rough."

"Yes, I'll go below," said Lady Redcliff. "Mr. Fane will help me down those dreadful stairs, I'm sure."

Gerald did this, and fled. Theo stayed a few minutes with her grandmother, and then, leaving her and the maids in settled misery, came on deck, wrapped in a large shawl, and sat down in a breezy place, looking out over the rough, green sea.

The spray damped her hair; the fresh, salt wind painted her pale cheeks a pretty red. As the boat went driving along, the air and movement seemed to bring new life to her whole nature. She began to feel a wild, happy excitement, as if she was riding Aster fast over a boundless stretch of moor.

She wished in her mind that it was all sea, that for days, and weeks, and months she could be carried on thus. Then, with a little self-reproachful smile, she thought that few people on board would agree with her.

She could not help saying what she felt to Gerald Fane, who presently came across to her from the other side of the boat, where he had been smoking.

"Isn't this glorious, and fresh, and delightful?" she said to him. "How one

would enjoy a long voyage! There is such freedom in the sea."

"Yes," said Gerald. But he was not very enthusiastic. "May I sit down here?" he said. "It is very strange to meet you again like this."

Theo forgot the glorious freshness of the sea, and looked at him with a quick glance. He spoke so sadly that she was puzzled.

In their last talk—those ten minutes at Burlington House—he had been ready to forget everything but the pleasure of talking to her. What was the matter with him now?

"Are you going to have a holiday in Switzerland?" she said. "Isn't it rather early for the mountains?"

"Not exactly a holiday; those are things I don't have," said Gerald, staring at the sea.

Theo paused a moment; it struck her again how very grave he looked, with something of the hopelessness that had been in his face that evening at the gate—some silent trouble that was beyond her curing. And yet, was that possible?

"Why doesn't he tell me all about it?" thought Theo unreasonably. "He is very stupid." Then she said in a low voice: "I am afraid you have been ill. I hope nothing is wrong with your sister?"

"How did you know? I believe you know everything," said Gerald, looking at her.

Her bright sea-colour deepened a little, but she smiled.

"No, I don't. Tell me," she said very softly.

"It is a horrid story. I ought not to plague you with it," said Gerald after a pause.

"If you don't mind telling me, I should very much like to hear. What can it be?" said Theo anxiously. "I might be able to help you."

"No, thanks—thanks, you couldn't," he said in a tone of great pain. "If I can catch them, that's all I want—to catch them in time."

Theo looked up in horror.

"My brother took Ada abroad a week ago; he said she was looking thin, and it would do her good. They were going up the Rhine into Switzerland; he talked of staying three weeks or so. Yesterday by the second post I got a line from Ada, from Basle, to say that Mr. Warren had met them there. You remember that fellow?"

"Yes, certainly," said Theo, listening with the deepest interest.

"She said Clarence was arranging with him to go on into Italy, but they wouldn't tell her where they were going. They laughed when she asked questions, and told her to wait a little. She hated Warren more than ever, and his manners were worse, she said. She was frightened and vexed, and didn't want to go on; she had told Clarence, but he laughed at her. Unfortunately I know what it all means, Miss Meynell. That brute wants to marry Ada, and he and Clarence know very well that they will never get my consent, so they think they are going to do it without it. Now you understand that I'm mad with impatience, and I mean to travel night and day till I catch them," he said, setting his teeth, and pressing his hands together. "It's a wild-goose chase, but I may find out at Basle where they are gone. Ada wrote to me without Clarence's knowledge, so he won't guess that I am on the track—old rascal!"

"But it seems to me most wonderful that he should wish it," said Theo after a moment. "I thought he was kind to your sister."

"He finds himself so mixed up with Warren, so bound, that he can refuse him nothing. If you will believe me, this is an old bargain between them. I knew nothing of it till one day last autumn, while you were at Woodcote. Clarence and I fought over it then, and I did make him promise to say nothing to Ada till after she was seventeen—that's a fortnight ago now. I was a tremendous fool to let him take her abroad, but if I thought at all, I thought Warren was far enough off in Italy—he was in Sicily when we heard last—and she had had such an awfully dull winter, poor child, with no one but me, and no friends near, and she liked the idea of going."

"Don't be unhappy," said Theo, as he stopped suddenly. "It is a great trouble, but you will catch them in time, I feel sure."

"I don't seem to realise what a trouble it is," said Gerald, "and yet I haven't slept since I got her letter."

"Do you know I am not entirely surprised," said Theo after a few moments of silent sympathy. "I heard a report last year when I was at Woodcote, but I could hardly believe it."

"Who from?" asked Gerald almost sternly.

"Some one had heard Mr. Warren talking in a railway-carriage. None of us liked to believe it. It was very much on my mind when I came to see your sister that day, but I saw she knew nothing, and I felt sure you would take care of her; but I took one liberty, for which you must forgive me. I gave her my address, and told her to write to me if she ever wanted any help—if I could do anything for her, I mean. Of course I knew she had you, but still a girl sometimes wants a girl to speak to."

"It was angelically kind of you," said Gerald. "But that brute—talking about her in a railway-carriage—that would astonish Clarence, I think. If I ever get at him——"

Theo was almost startled by the energy of anger in his face and voice, yet she admired it; it was a little catching, too, and there was a lovely light in her eyes as she looked at him. She liked Gerald all the better because he could almost forget her presence in his anger for Ada, and a wild wish crossed her mind that they, too, were going to tear on night and day till they overtook those scheming men, and rescued Ada. Her grandmother would have entered into such a plan very heartily some years ago; perhaps she was too old for it now; and there was an odd incongruity in the thought of Combe, and Sparrow, and Jackson, all chasing over Europe with their many packages, turned, as it were, into active members of a police force.

She resolved, however, that her grandmother should hear the story, which would interest her still more in Mr. Fane and his doings.

The passage was only too quick for these people, who had much more to say to each other than could possibly be said in an hour and a half. It was true that after Gerald had poured out his troubles and anxieties, and began to realise more and more vividly who was near him, listening to him, his talk did not run quite so easily. But there was so much to say, so much to find out, if only one had dared to use one's tongue. As one could only look, the pain and doubt were as great as the pleasure; yet it was not only Gerald who felt a kind of despairing chill when they reached Calais pier.

"What a horrid crowd! Where's Mr. Fane? I want him to take me on shore," said Lady Redcliff, emerging from the cabin.

"Take my arm, grandmamma. Won't that do?" said Theo.

"No, it won't. Where is he?"

Theo did not at all intend to answer these imperious questions by summoning Gerald, and putting her grandmother in his charge; but at that moment he came up, saying in a low voice, "Can I be of any use?" and Lady Redcliff instantly took possession of him.

Theo could not help being a little amused, as she followed them along the station, to hear her grandmother telling him their arrangements for the journey, and asking him to order luncheon for them. As they went into the buffet, Gerald looked at Theo with a smile which was both a question and an apology. The answer being satisfactory, he devoted himself to Lady Redcliff's wishes with a sort of quiet enthusiasm, and did not leave them till they were safely established in their carriage.

"I'm going second-class, but I shall see you at some of the stations," he said as they parted.

"Yes; we shall expect you to look after us; you are a very useful person," said Lady Redcliff.

He looked at Theo, took off his hat, and went away.

"I am in love with him, too," said Lady Redcliff, tucking herself up on her sofa.

"I thought we were making a little too much use of him," said Theo dreamily, as the train began to groan and rattle, and move slowly on.

"Don't be jealous; he doesn't belong to you yet," said Lady Redcliff. "And I'm afraid it won't do, my dear, so you need not exert yourself to be angry. That man will never make his fortune; he is far too much of a gentleman. He is born to spend money, not to scrape it together, and the want of it has soured his temper a little already. No, it won't do, Theo; those stupid cousins of yours were right for once. Do you mind much, child?"

Theo made no answer; she was staring out of the window at the masts of Calais.

"I hope he isn't going to dawdle about the lakes too?" said Lady Redcliff.

"Oh no, indeed," said Theo, turning to her grandmother with flushed cheeks and shining eyes. "He has something very different to think about."

As they travelled on towards Amiens, she told her grandmother the story that Gerald had told her on board.

"The men are brutes, and the girl is a fool," said Lady Redcliff. "I suppose you want to go and look for her too."

"I can't, you know," said Theo.

"No; you are tied and hampered by your duty to me. Luckily for you, perhaps," said Lady Redcliff rather thoughtfully. "No, I like the young man; he is intelligent, and his face is so very familiar; but I can't have you and myself entangled with a lot of second-rate people."

"Second-rate, grandmamma! You are as bad as the Goodalls."

"Heaven forbid! Don't insult me, or I'll take you back to England from the next station. Money-grubbing people who come out of coal-pits are not exactly the companions for you and me, Theo; therefore, if we drop upon these runaways anywhere, you are to understand that I'll have nothing to do with them."

"You can do as you please," replied Theo. "I shall take Ada Fane, and keep her till her brother comes."

This was a very fair beginning of a quarrel, but it was checked by Amiens station, and the appearance of Gerald, who told Theo rather shyly that if she liked to hurry to the buffet there was time for a cup of tea. Lady Redcliff's face cleared up at the sight of him.

"Get along," she said to her granddaughter, "and come back in a better temper."

She thrust her old head, wrapped in a black shawl, out of the carriage window, and half laughed, half sighed, as she looked after the two slim young creatures hurrying up the platform.

"I can't stand that boy's eyes at all," she muttered to herself. "But nonsense, it won't do! I haven't got enough to leave Theo, and, if I had, I can't die for their benefit, that's rather too much to expect. It's a tiresome, provoking business, for of course it must come to nothing in the end. I wish that silly old Peters had never told me to go abroad. Ah, there you are, Sparrow. Ashamed of yourself, I hope."

Poor Sparrow, who had come from her own carriage to see if her mistress wanted anything, was a convenient object of wrath till Gerald Fane brought Theo back again. She was looking happy and lovely, the cup of tea seemed to have done all that her grandmother could have wished.

Lady Redcliff glanced from her to Gerald, and something seemed to touch her hard old heart. When he was gone, and they were off again, she made no more

attacks on Theo and her friends, but lay curled up like a black cat in the corner, watching the girl under half-closed eyelids, as she sat upright, and looked out quietly over the broad yellow fields and sweeping downs and plains of France, where the sun was setting.

They saw Gerald again at Tergnier, where he dined with them. Theo was rather silent, but Lady Redcliff talked a good deal to him, and discovered that her Captain Fane was his grandfather's brother; this lifted him very high in her favour. Probably Gerald himself did not care much, having quite enough to occupy his mind that evening, but he was perfectly polite to the old lady, who for her part had not been so civil to any one for years.

Then came the long, dark, weary, clamorous night. As they rushed along Lady Redcliff slept quite peacefully, but Theo remained wide awake all through those hours, and so did Gerald in his part of the train. Then came green valleys and fir-woods in the early morning, and Basle, and the "Three Kings." Gerald went with them to the hotel, hoping to find his brother's name in the visitor's book, but it was not there, and he started off to search the other hotels for it. Poor little Ada, in her haste and anxiety, had only dated her letter from Basle.

In the evening he came again to the Three Kings. A few people, looking more or less bored, were turning over papers in the salon. Lady Redcliff was there, in a large armchair by one of the windows; she did not look at all bored, but very lively and malicious, and was reading a French novel. Theo was not to be seen in the room. Several eyes were turned on the fine, graceful figure and eager face of the young man, in his travelling clothes, looking so worn and unhappy. He came across at once to Lady Redcliff.

"I have traced them," he said in a low voice. "They went from here to Lucerne for one night, and then on to Como. There is a train to-night, and I must be off in ten minutes." He looked round the room again. "Miss Meynell is not here—will you tell her, and say good-bye for me?"

Lady Redcliff looked hard at him for a moment, smiled, and pointed to one of the windows, which stood a little open on the balcony. Gerald stepped out at once into the evening air, on the long, low balcony

with its drapery of green leaves, into the rush of the magnificent Rhine, rolling away to the west.

At the far end of the balcony Theo was standing bare-headed, facing the evening light, which gilded her dark hair and flushed her cheeks; but when she turned to meet Gerald, the shadow of night and parting was in her eyes.

The moment was so beautiful, the river and the sky were so full of happy, solemn glory, and he had only come to tell her that he was going! For a minute or two he forgot to speak; they looked at each other once, and then stood a little apart, looking at the rushing river. But this could not go on; he began to speak rather quickly, and told her what he had just told Lady Redcliff.

"So I must say good-bye, now," he said.

"Good-bye," said Theo, very low.

"Will you think of me now and then," said Gerald, with a sudden passionate sadness in his voice, "and—hope I may be in time?"

"You know I will," said Theo.

He stood silent a moment longer, looking down into her face, but she did not look up at him.

"Good-bye!" he said again, and he suddenly stooped, caught both her hands, and kissed them. "Forgive me—say you forgive me! You have known it all this time, and one can't live for ever on nothing."

Then bells began to ring, and clocks to chime in the city.

"I must go," he said; and then Theo lifted her eyes, but he was gone.

He hurried through the salon, where Lady Redcliff shook her head at him, and called out:

"Let us hear of you."

As for Theo, she stood still on the balcony in a dream, while the Rhine flowed past her feet in his strong, majestic current towards the red and orange and purple sunset sky.

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A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XLII. COPY FOR THE RYECOTE HERALD.

"WHAT do you think of that?" exclaimed Mrs. John as she handed Archie over a letter from Ida. Archie read it eagerly with a falling countenance.

"She believes it," he exclaimed in answer, as he laid the letter down.

"Of course she believes it, as she would believe anyone; or as anyone would believe it, who didn't know this Miss Bompas and her reason for confirming Captain Brabazon's story."

"But why should she confirm it? Why should she help to reconcile Ida to him, if she cares for him, or would pretend to care for him?"

"Because she either loves you, or hates you so much that she would hinder your reconciliation to Ida even at the price of his."

Anastasia herself could not have given a clearer or truer explanation of her motive in writing, at Dick's dictation, the letter confirming his account of their seeming intimacy. She could not herself have said whether it was love or hatred of Archie made her come into Dick's plan. She liked a strong flirtation with Dick for the same precise reason that he liked one with her—he was a very fine animal. Dick, indeed, might have sat as a model for the hero of a lady's novel. Strong as Hercules; handsome as Apollo; selfish and sensual as Silenus; and (to such women as Anastasia) rather brutal in manners as in morals. Therefore Anastasia, too, took him for a hero, "an ideal knight;" was flattered by his attentions, but not so overpowered by them as to overlook the chance

of turning them to profit. She had already got many a present from the free-handed Dick, who like Catiline was, "alieni appetens, sui profusus," and she expected more when he became master of The Keep.

But her feeling towards Dick was altogether different, both in kind and in degree, from that she entertained towards Archie, whom she loved or hated, or both, with a passionate intensity. She wrote the letter, therefore, with a secret and savage satisfaction, while protesting to Dick a jealous reluctance to promote in this way his reconciliation with her rival. Indeed, Dick had to purchase her complaisance by a costly present.

So it was a shrewd bolt Mrs. John shot, when she said that Anastasia loved or hated Archie so much as to prevent his reconciliation to Ida by promoting Dick's.

Archie sat for some time in silent wretchedness, his head buried in his hands. At length he started up, and said vehemently:

"She mustn't marry him!"

"It's in your own hands, Archie, I think," said Mrs. John hesitatingly, looking anxiously up into his face. He shook his head very decidedly.

"Ask her to take my name," he exclaimed bitterly—alluding at once to his illegitimacy and to the scandal which held up the name (to which he had no right now) to public scorn. "Even if she were free, and would stoop to accept me, I could not stoop to ask her."

Mrs. John was silenced. With all her prejudice in favour of Archie and against Dick, she could not think it honourable to ask Ida to break her engagement in order that she might share a name and fortune so shipwrecked and disgraced.

"Mother, you might hinder it," he said presently, alluding to Ida's marriage.

"But how, Archie?" asked his mother sadly.

"How? Tell her it must mean lifelong wretchedness. He cares nothing for her; he's not worthy of her."

"But if he saved her life at the risk of his own, and wished to marry her when he thought her penniless, he must care for her, Archie," urged Mrs. John, who could not help being just, even to Dick. That his mother should take this view gave Archie a pause. After all what did he know to Dick's disadvantage, except his intimacy with Anastasia, which at least admitted of the construction Dick had put upon it? Was it then a mere and mean jealousy which made him so dislike and distrust a rival? His mother seemed to think so, Ida would think so, anyone would think so—he could hardly help thinking so himself. His illness, and the successive shocks of disaster and disgrace which followed upon it, had shaken him terribly, and rendered him for the time childlike in his self-distrust and dependence.

"It's not jealousy, mother. I was thinking only of her."

"I know, of course, it's not jealousy, dear; and I share your distrust of him and of such a marriage; but I do not see what I can do—or Ida either," looking up at him with an expression of the deepest pain and perplexity in her face.

"We'd better go home, mother," he said at length in a voice of despair. They had stayed at Heatherley long after they needed for Archie's health's sake, in order to be near Ida. "We'd better go home," therefore meant, "I'd better not see her again."

"But you promised to bid her good-bye, Archie," cried Mrs. John, almost in consternation. She hoped for something, she hardly knew what, from this last interview.

"I cannot do it; I cannot trust myself. I must write," he said, walking up and down in extreme agitation. Mrs. John said nothing, for she felt he would not—could not give up this last interview. It was not in the least likely that he would, even if the decision to return home at once had been left in his hands; but it had not. For at this point the Rev. John appeared with another piece of bad news for Archie. Poor old Ben, the crack express driver, had come at last to grief, and to bitter grief, too. His engine, mounting the rails at a part of the line where there were at once facing-points and a sharp curve, ran along the ballast for a few yards, and then breaking loose from its train, had turned over on its side

and badly crushed and scalded Ben. He was now lying in the Ryecote Infirmary, in so precarious a state that the doctors hardly hoped to save his life, even at the cost of the amputation of one of his legs.

Such was the news poor Liz had telegraphed to Edgburn Vicarage, whence it was brought forthwith to Archie by the Rev. John. Archie, absolutely forgetting for the moment all his own troubles, started off at once in deep distress for Ryecote Infirmary, where he found Liz prostrate in despair at the loss of Ben's leg. It is hard to enter into the horror of the poor of a mutilation of this kind. It is not altogether, or even mostly, because the loss of a limb means the loss of a livelihood, but from a feeling deeper than reason can reach, that such mutilation is sacrilegious. In many cases the poor would prefer death for themselves or their friends, to life at the cost of a limb. Liz's abhorrence of the amputation did not go to this depth, it is true; but it stopped not far short of it. Though, therefore, the operation had been so well done and borne that Ben's life, which had hung by a hair, was, speaking humanly, now safe, Liz was inconsolable. We have too much respect for her grief to print the expression of it, which might sound almost grotesque to those who did not see the anguish of her heart in her face. Enough to say that Archie's coming was welcomed not more for the love she bore him and the comfort he brought, than for the chance it gave her to carry off poor Ben's limb—reverently coffined—to be buried in the grave of their little girl. It would take her, she thought, nearly a day to get to this graveyard and return, and, in her absence, Archie gladly undertook to fill her place by his dear old friend Ben's bedside. Now, both these things—her pious mission, and Archie's pious devotion to poor Ben, had, as we shall see, very curious and important bearings upon our hero's fortunes.

Ben's case was at first thought so critical that he was allowed a room to himself in the hospital, and even now, when he seemed almost out of danger, the house-surgeon hesitated a little about admitting Archie to see him. The sight of Archie had, however, rather a soothing than an exciting effect upon the patient, for a reason which the doctor could never have suspected. Poor Ben's chief trouble was not the loss of his leg—of his livelihood, almost of his life—but the loss of his character unjustly.

Let us explain this, as it is worth explaining to those ignorant of the inner mysteries of railway management.

Ben had already been told by the traffic-manager that he was wholly to blame for the accident, and he knew that at the forthcoming investigation it would be attributed solely to his recklessness. And, indeed, it was proved at this investigation that the train was travelling thirty miles an hour when the engine left the metals, whereas the company's printed rules prescribed a maximum speed of fifteen miles an hour at this curve and these facing-points. Now, the gentleman who produced the rule knew—none better—that an express-driver, who worked by it, would be first fined, then degraded, and finally discharged for not keeping time. The simple truth is that some railway companies' rules are printed solely for the emergency of a coroner's jury, an action for damages, or a government inspection, being preposterously unworkable by the time-table. They are, and must be, in abeyance so long as all goes well, but upon the occurrence of an accident and an investigation, they are produced to save the company's purse and character at the cost of the ruin of some unfortunate guard, driver, or signalman. It was under such a rule that Ben, as the traffic-manager considerably informed him, would be made responsible for an accident which was really due to the line being out of gauge at the points where it occurred. Poor Ben was nearly broken-hearted at the prospect of being robbed in this shameful way of a character he had so hardly earned, and so long and well maintained. He couldn't get Liz—absorbed as she was in the more material part of the trouble, and wholly ignorant of the technical details of Ben's business—to sympathise with, or even understand, his feeling. But here was Archie, at once a friend and an expert, to whom he could unbosom himself to his intense relief.

"Them rules are catch pints and nowt else, Master Archie." Ben's image was a happy one. Catch points, or trap points, are points which come into use only in case of an accident, and then usually wreck a goods to save from wreck a passenger train. If half a heavy goods train should break its couplings and run back down an incline, catch points turn it off the metals altogether to its own ruin; but to the preservation of the oncoming express. "Them rules are catch pints. and nowt

else, Master Archie. You ne'er hear on 'em abaast* there's a smash. Tha knaws, Master Archie, if aw'd run by that ere rule, aw'd hev got t' sack at t' month's end, aw wad. But when they let t' road run daan whiles it's that aat o' gage that aw'm bahn to run off at a mile an 'aar, it's 't' criminal racklessness o' t' driver."

"It was out of gauge?"

"It wor aboon two inch aat o' gage. Bill Perry—him that's foreman platelayer ovver that part o' t' road—cam' t' aar Liz, when he heerd aw wor bahn to dee, an tauld her he couldn't sleep for thinkin' it wor along o' him; for t' road wor all to piecea."

"But why didn't she tell Mellish this?"

Mellish was the traffic-manager.

"Nay, aw telled her to say nowt abaast it. It wor friendly o' Bill, tha knaws, to tak' till it, an' him wi' a wife an' eight bairns. It isn't like either," continued Ben, after a slight pause, "that they'd hearken to Bill hisself, if he telled 'em owt wor wrang wi' t' road, as it wad get into t' papers an' t' public wad tak' agin' t' line. Nowt like liggin' t' job on to t' driver as they thowt aw wor bahn to dee; eh, an' aw wish aw hed—Master Archie, aw do—aw wish aw hed!" with a sudden drop from bitterness to despair in his tone, which was very pathetic.

Archie said all he could to comfort him, with a success for which he hardly hoped. In the first place it was a great relief to Ben, to go minutely into all the details of the accident with one as conversant as himself with railway matters; and, in the second place, Archie believed, and at length made Ben believe, that he might and must be set right with the directors and with the public. On the return of Liz, Archie promised to see and instruct a lawyer to represent Ben at the enquiry, and to bring out the whole truth of the matter.

But Liz was long in returning. Archie waited on and on till he could wait no longer. Only by the courtesy of the house-surgeon had he been allowed to stay so late; and now the infirmary must be closed for the night. Archie, therefore, having taken leave of Ben with a promise to return in the morning, made his way to the station. Here he ascertained that there was no possibility of Liz reaching Ryecote by rail till late in the forenoon of the next day; while, as for himself, the last train to Heatherley had gone more than an hour ago. He set

* "Abaast"—i.e. without.
† "Tiddin'"—i.e. leaving

out to walk, as the first-fruits of his resolution to spare his mother henceforth all expense, of course taking no account of the possibility of the night air and the fatigue bringing about a relapse, against which his mother would have been glad to pay any insurance.

However, the night was fair, and the distance not great, and Archie was glad of the lonely walk to think over the troubles which had come upon him in such force and frequency within the last few weeks. He was roused from his dismal reveries as he neared Heatherley by the sight of the sky aglow with the reflection of a great fire. It could only be, he thought, the great corn-stack behind the flour-mill, which stood between the river and the railway, a little outside the village. Hastening to the top of the hill, at whose foot he had first seen the glow in the sky, his impression was confirmed that the stack had caught fire, while the mill itself was too near it to escape, especially as the wind was blowing from the stack towards the mill. As he got nearer, however, he found it was the mill itself, and not the stack behind it, which was in flames. Running now at full speed, he soon came in sight of the small crowd the village could muster at such an hour, the main body standing still, staring, as though fascinated, with white, upturned faces, at one of the topmost windows of the mill, while a few ran hither and thither in wild and bewildered excitement. Amid, and high above their hoarse cries of dismay, direction, and encouragement, he could hear shriek upon shriek of a woman mad with terror, following each other in that kind of measured mechanical succession you hear only from the demented. Coming nearer, he saw by the light of the flames, which made spring after spring towards her, the wretched woman standing within the shattered window of a room in the third storey, clothed only in a night-dress, which was soaked and streaked with blood. Either the window couldn't be opened, or she in her horror couldn't open it, and she had cut face, hands, and knees in frantically dashing them through the panes. While he stood rooted to the ground with horror at this spectacle, the fire, which seemed to have crouched down for a moment to make a better spring, shot suddenly up in a bright broad tongue of flame, and showed him—Anastasia!

She and her mother had just changed—as they often had to change through the old lady's drunkenness—their lodgings.

This time, however, the change was directly due to Anastasia's resolve henceforth to have a bedroom to herself, an accommodation which they could get only at the mill. As it turned out, it would have been better for her to have put up with the annoyance of keeping the wretched woman under her eye at night, for it was she who, while in a condition not far short of delirium tremens, had set the building on fire. Thus it was that the fire broke out in the lower part of the building where she slept, cutting off Anastasia, who slept above, from all hope of escape by the staircase.

Still, there had been plenty of time and means to have saved her after the fire was first discovered, if the arrangements for the extinction of fire in the mill had been as admirably ordered as they were designed. There was some ingenious and perfect system whereby the water-wheel worked a fire-engine fed from the mill-dam, which would have got the fire—when first discovered—under in an hour, if there had been any hose; but the hose had either been mislaid, or had never been provided. The time lost in getting the fire-engine in gear and position, and in looking distractedly for the hose, gave the flames such strength and head, that there was now small hope of saving Anastasia—who had not long appeared at the window—by a ladder, if there had been one of sufficient length, or if the one there was had been spliced to that brought from the village. Just as Archie appeared this forlorn chance was being tried. Two men were splicing the ladders, while the body of the crowd, almost insane with excitement and horror, were shouting the same cries over and over again.

"Where's the hose?" "Fetch a ladder! Oh, Lord! Fetch a ladder!" "Fetch a bed!" "Throw a rope!" "She's going to leap!" "Stand back!" "Good God! she's mad!"

For at this moment Anastasia—a ghastly spectacle, her face white, bloodstained, drawn, with drooped jaw, and eyes wide and wild at the sight of so frightful a death, ceasing suddenly to scream, made another mad dash at the window. Then some frantic hands wrenched the ladder, before it had been securely spliced, and raised it to the window.

"Who'll go up?"

"Will no one——"

"I will!" shouted Archie, wrestling his way madly through the crowd.

He had literally to go through a sheet of fire a third of the way up, but this was not

the danger. The danger was that the fire would burn the ladder through, or at least the rope which spliced it, before the rescuer could reach the window. There was a sudden silence, breathless, broken only by the fierce roar of the flames, as Archie swiftly ascended the ladder. Swift, however, as he was in ascending, swifter still was the fire, which reached the splicing before he did. A long tongue of flame shot upwards, and seemed but to touch it when the ladders fell apart. The upper one thundered down sideways upon the pavement, while the lower one fell against the house and into the flames with a shock which nearly shook Archie off. He got badly scorched, but was otherwise none the worse when he reached the ground.

A heartbreaking groan broke from the crowd when the ladders parted, and now they waited in helpless and hopeless silence for the end.

"Give me a rope!" shouted Archie hoarsely, as a sudden hope struck him.

"Splicing's no use."

"I don't want to splice them. I can save her yet. Have you a rope?"

"Here's one!"

"Follow me with it," he cried, as he dragged one of the ladders after him. "Here, carry the ladder round to the back. Quick!"

Two men took up the ladder and hurried after him, while a third, with a rope, met him at the yard-gate. Archie took the rope from him, tied one end of it round his waist, hurried to the great corn-stack, and scaled it with the boyish agility with which in old days he had scaled with poor Tom the hay-stack that supported one end of the dizzy drawbridge, leading into the attic where they kept their pets. In truth, it was the remembrance of this drawbridge which suggested to him now a chance of rescuing Anastasia.

Having reached the top of the rick, he bid the men tie the other end of the rope to the ladder, which he then hauled up, and shoved across to the nearest window. This, in less than a minute, he battered, sash and all, to pieces, using the ladder as a ram, and then, using it as a drawbridge, he was in another moment in the mill. The room in which he found himself was comparatively clear of smoke, and cool; but when he groped his way to the door and opened it, he was forced to fling himself on his face, and crawl along on his hands and knees, so suffocating was the smoke that rose from the blazing staircase beneath. How the corridor, along

which he crept, was supported, he could not conceive, for it seemed almost to float like a raft upon the raging sea of fire beneath. He shouted "Anastasia!" two or three times, and she seemed to hear him; at least she began again to scream, and guided by her cries he reached the room, which was fortunately on the same floor.

"Anastasia!"

"Archie!" lengthening out the last syllable into another wild cry.

"Come, this way!" taking her by the hand, and leading her, passive, bewildered, suddenly calmed, out into the corridor. "Down on your hands and knees. Follow me. Quick!" He spoke purposely sharply and imperiously with a tonic effect.

Of herself, not even the horrible face of death would have frightened her into crossing this bridge of Al Sirât; but Archie's presence and peremptory tone subdued her to implicit and almost mechanical obedience. She imitated and followed him, creeping after him along the crackling, smouldering corridor upon her hands and knees, till they reached safely the back room. Here Archie decided that, as the ladder would not bear the weight of both, and as she could not be trusted to cross it safely at that dizzy height alone, she had best be lowered directly from the window to the ground. Stripping off his coat, he bid her put it on, and while she was so engaged, he ran across the ladder for the rope, and returning, he knotted it quickly and deftly round her under the arms, now protected somewhat by the coat, and bid her drop from the window, that he might lower her gently to the ground. Anastasia, still fortunately dazed, obeyed him as promptly and implicitly as though she was in a mesmeric trance. She stepped to the window, sat on its sill for a moment, and then lifting herself off by the hands, was lowered steadily to the ground. She had not to pass through the flames, as the fire had broken out in front, and the wind blowing from the back kept it still at bay.

The appearance of Archie with Anastasia at the window was the signal for a wild shout of relief and admiration from the crowd, which had shifted now to the back as the centre of interest, and had there waited the result of Archie's bold and brilliant plan of rescue in a suspense that was absolutely breathless. The shout was repeated again and again while Anastasia was being lowered; after she reached the ground, and was shawled and carried off by the women to the nearest house: and.

above all, when Archie let himself down by the same rope. Having drawn the ladder inside and cross-barred the window with it, he fastened one end of the rope to it, and dropped swiftly down hand over hand. Almost before he touched the ground he was mobbed, and devoured with admiration, escaping with difficulty the honour of being chaired. This form of torture was suggested by a young gentleman who filled to overflowing the post of correspondent to a Rye-cote journal, and in that capacity had blistered a couple of columns with tears of alternate pity and rage over Anastasia's attempt at suicide, and its cause. Here was a sudden and astounding turn to that romance with which all England would ring! There was not the least doubt that his glowing description of Archie, white, gaunt, fever-shattered, springing from a sick-bed, which had almost been a death-bed, to rush forth to this heroic rescue of a girl's life, which he was supposed to have spurned from him to suicide, would be copied into every newspaper in the three kingdoms. No sooner, therefore, had he suggested that Archie should be chaired (with a view to a picturesque effect wherewith to crown his description), than he hurried off to have a column of copy in time, if possible, for the first edition of his paper.

In contrast with this gentleman's professional enthusiasm was the stolid satisfaction of the owner of the mill, which was most amply insured. He had watched the fire with the coolness of Sheridan at the burning of his theatre ("Why, where should a man feel more at ease than at his own fireside?" asked Sherry), but had not shown quite as much mastery over his emotions during Archie's attempts at the rescue of his lodger. After these attempts had succeeded he drew Archie with difficulty aside from the enthusiastic crowd, to say to him with the air of communicating something of world-wide importance:

"Eh, but aw wor flayed* when aw seed thee on t' rick."

"Oh, it was all right."

"Ay, it wor all reet; but it mud ha' been all wrang. Thee co-at wor a-fire, tha knaws, when tha climbed t' rick. Aw seed it reek mysen, an' t' straw wor that dree a spark mud ha' done it."

"We should have managed to escape through the window all the same."

"Happen yo' mud; but t' rick worn't insured!"

* "Flayed"—i.e. frightened.

A CRUISE IN THE NORFOLK BROADS.*

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

LIKE many of our neighbours, the question, "Where shall we go this summer?" was the subject of frequent conversations between my wife and myself. We always begin these discussions early in the year. Being careful and economical folk, we like to get all we can for our money; and we estimate that in this way we double our holiday, the total pleasure afforded us by these discussions being equal to the holiday itself. They—the discussions—generally took place during the operation of dressing, and the direction our speculative wanderings took depended largely on the sort of morning the fates sent us. On a bright, sunny morning we braved the rain and mist, and went north, along the coast and islands of Western Scotland. When it looked less settled, Switzerland had its turn. In the cold, wet mornings which so often come to us in summer, we had to go south to the Italian lakes or the Mediterranean, and so on.

In this way we had many pleasant rambles, till the almanack warned us that we must soon determine where our actual holiday was to be spent, and then, obliged to face prosaic facts and details, we found that the length of our tether was considerably shortened.

To Scotland, and the seaside generally, the doctor said no. To Switzerland, the Italian lakes, and the Mediterranean, the family purse said a most emphatic no, and as time went on the pleasant contemplation, "Suppose we go here," or, "What do you think of there?" changed to an almost despairing, "Where on earth shall we go?"

At length, one morning, inspiration came, the splashing in the matutinal tub was suspended, and from the dressing-room came the exultant cry: "I've got it; we'll go to the Norfolk Broads!" The answer from the next room scarcely echoed the confident note: "The Norfolk Broads! Where are they?" As I had but a vague idea of where they were, or what they were, the question was annoying; but I felt that the suggested way out of our difficulty was a stroke of genius, and genius is not to be damped by a cold reception. I recalled what I had heard some years before from a friend who had been there, and

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 25, p. 196, "The Broads and Rivers of East Anglia"; and Vol. 25, p. 487, "Decoys."

filled in the gaps from my imagination. I drew glowing pictures of miles of inland water, of quaint villages, picturesque churches and ruins, clouds of wild-fowl, tens of fish, new, unhackneyed country, and, above all, of cheap amusements and cheaper living.

In the end the Norfolk Broads were, provisionally, agreed on, and we set to work to find out something about them.

At this point, however, we found that our difficulties had only just begun.

In the course of the next few weeks I repeated many hundreds of times the formula: "Do you know anything of Norfolk?" To about sixty per cent. of these questions the answer was an uncompromising "No." To about thirty per cent. it was: "I have been through it in the train." To five per cent. more: "I have been to Cromer." So that there only remained five per cent. of the cases in which I could put the second part of my question: "Do you know the Broads?"

To this the answer generally came in the form of another question: "Who are they? Is it a family?" which did not enlighten me much. I could have said as much, or as little, as that, myself. Then I found a friend, who had a friend, whose cousin had been there. In the course of time this friend's friend's cousin was communicated with and sent, as her contribution to the solution of our difficulty, the information that the Broads—our paradise of scenery, sailing, fishing, and shooting—were "Barren, treeless, featureless mud-swamps." Poor thing, she was a woman! I gave her full credit for the energy of her description, and continued my quest for further information.

At last I was rewarded. One morning I got a guide-book to the Broads and Rivers of Norfolk; in the afternoon I received a letter further describing them; and in the evening came a detailed account from a man who had been there, which told me that this was exactly the happy hunting-ground of which I had been in search. It never rains but it pours. After that, every third person I met seemed to know the Broads, or to have a brother, or an aunt, or somebody who lived there; so that, when we left Liverpool Street on our way north, it seemed hardly worth while to go there, we knew so much about them.

"We" were—my wife, myself, and "Taffy," the most affectionate and sagacious colley that ever chose a friend from among that lower race, the humans. He

could not be left behind, of course—such an idea never entered any head, least of all Taffy's. Stay, though, that is not absolutely true. We did once hint at it with bated breath in the dead of night, but the hangdog look we both wore in the morning betrayed us, and the attitude of combined dignity, sorrow, and affection, which Taffy adopted for some time after, effectually put to flight any such meditated treachery on our part. It would have been easier, and not much more expensive, to take a nurse and a couple of children with us, but we did not mention that to him. It would have been easier on any line, but more so on the Great Eastern. They have a sort of anti-dog mania on that line—a mania which even affects the passengers. I met a man in one of their trains who said he objected, on principle, to a dog coming into the carriage. To such an extent have the demoralising habits of the Company spread. No other human being has yet been found who has been able to resist Taffy's insinuating smile. At the quaint old-world inn at Norwich the stately landlady shook her comely grey curls at him, and said she was very sorry, but he couldn't come up to our room—it was quite against the rules of the house—and he had to be taken to the stables; but in half an hour the whole house was in league against her, and in the morning Mr. Taff was found comfortably curled up at our bedroom door, waiting to come in with the hot water.

As soon as we had determined on going to the Broads, and had collected our information about them, the papers began to publish letter after letter, account after account, about them. Whether it was cause or effect I don't know, but when we got to the Broad country we found that many other people had conceived the same happy idea as ourselves, and had come there too. In consequence, when we arrived at Wroxham, which we proposed to make our base of operations, we found the two little roadside-inns full to overflowing, and turning away would-be customers by the score. The accommodation of Wroxham is limited, and the tendency of the people is towards sleep. They stand and chew the cud of reflection while they gaze at a stranger, and are chary of speech and information. Mrs. Giles out there—pointing to some cottages a couple of miles in front—might have some lodgings to let, or she might not. Similarly Mrs. Smith out vonder—three quarters of a mile

behind—might be able to take us in. It was, therefore, only after many miles of dusty tramping that I got a roof to cover us, by taking a couple of rooms in a small farmhouse at full seaside season prices.

We then discovered another feature of Wroxham, which we afterwards found to belong equally to all Norfolk. The butcher calls once a week—on Thursdays. On other days he seems to pursue some other calling. I have never seen a Norfolk butcher in the flesh; I suppose he does exist, because on that sacred day you can get meat if you happen to be on his beat, but I know from painful experience that you cannot get it on any other day. If you have eaten up your stock of meat before the next Thursday, you can eat tinned meat, if you have it, or salt pork, if you can get it, which you can sometimes. Sometimes, too, you can get a little milk, and occasionally a few eggs. You don't care to buy them often, though; the people sell them as if they were selling their family jewels, and it depresses you. Butter you can get in small quantities—nobody wants large quantities, for Norfolk butter is the worst in the world. You can get fowls, too, but they are cheaper and much better in the Strand.

The thing I was most disappointed about in the matter of food, however, was "Biffins." For many years I had seen "Norfolk Biffins" in Covent Garden and wondered at them. "Now," I thought, "I shall see them in their native country, hear how they are made, and see who eats them." On my first enquiry for them I thought I must be speaking to an idiot. Gradually, however, the dreadful truth dawned on me. Nobody even knew what they were. Nobody I asked, from whatever part of the county they came, had ever heard of "Norfolk Biffins." They are evidently a brilliant invention of the Covent Garden people for disposing of their rotten apples. I know this must be so, for I tasted a "Norfolk Dumpling," and no people could have invented both the biffins and the dumplings—there isn't room for them in one county. Altogether Norfolk is not a luxurious place to live in, in the matter of food. The towns are pretty much like other towns in that respect, but in the country places the bread is sometimes good, and the beer and whisky are generally good; so that if you can get on with those you do very well. If you want anything more it doesn't do to be particular. When once you begin your aquatic life, however, and have slept one night afloat, it doesn't

much matter what your food is, so long as there is enough of it. You could eat the mainshaft if it were stewed long enough, or the boom if it were cut thin enough.

The life of the "Broad District" is a thing entirely by itself. As Mr. Christopher Davies says in his guide-book: "In a journey through it by rail, you see nothing but its flatness; walk along its roads, you see the dullest side of it; but take to its water-highways, and the glamour of it steals over you, if you have aught of the love of nature, the angler, or the artist in you."

The writer of that panegyric knows the country thoroughly—knows it at all seasons of the year, and in all its moods; there is an enthusiasm in it that tells of deep love for the country of which he is talking, born of long study of it. The casual visitor cannot expect to see it in that way, of course, but he can see enough of it to understand the enthusiasm if, as Mr. Davies says, he has aught of the "love of nature, the angler, or the artist," and, as I should add, the sailor, in him.

The general character of the country is flat. Sometimes its flatness is relieved by timber, but often you can see many miles round in all directions by going a few feet up the mast of your boat. Draw a capital letter U, with the bottom of the letter, between the two uprights, very flat. Put Wroxham at the top of the right-hand upright, and Yarmouth at the bottom, Reedham at the bottom of the left-hand upright, and Norwich at the top; and you have a rough map of the river system of Norfolk. The distances are, roughly, thirty miles from Wroxham to Yarmouth, fifteen miles from Yarmouth to Reedham, and thirty miles from Reedham to Norwich. Prolong the left-hand upright of the letter another fifteen miles downwards, and you come to Oulton Broad, which is about a mile from Lowestoft.

Out of these rivers open, here and there, "Broad" or lakes which vary from an area of two or three hundred acres, and ten feet of depth, to mere ponds only a few inches deep. I cruised about for many hours in one of them with cutters of eight or ten tons burden, and a wherry, or local barge, of fifty tons; and in another I vainly tried to find a place for the night where we could float without stirring up the mud, in a boat that did not draw a foot of water.

The boats one meets in this country are various in size and rig; but the most popular rig is the cutter with

an enormous bowsprit, and the jib and staysail in one. The size varies from two or three tons to ten; but the build is so different from that of seagoing boats, that the tonnage would be deceptive to a man accustomed to seagoing craft. As a rule they are very full in the bow, and taper aft, with a very long, overhanging stern. This gives deck-room out of proportion to their size, while the smooth water in which they sail allows of a "booby-hutch," which gives considerable additional head-room, and greatly increases the comfort of the cabin.

Our voyage began at Wroxham, where we were fortunate enough to get hold of the only boat on the water that had accommodation for a lady. She was a yawl-rigged boat of twelve tons, and, having been fitted up by a gentleman for himself and his wife to live in, she had many more conveniences than one generally finds in boats let out for hire. Forward she had a forecabin for the two men; aft of this was a sleeping-cabin, with two standing bed-places—one bed being three feet wide, and the other two feet six inches—a washstand, and other conveniences. The main cabin would have dined four people comfortably, and six on a pinch. In fact, the owner told me that he had had four people living on board besides himself, his wife, and the two hands. In both cabins I could stand upright, and I am above rather than below the average height. Both were fitted with such a multitude of drawers, lockers, cupboards, shelves, hooks, that we found something fresh nearly every day, and afterwards learnt that we had missed the masterpiece of the whole arrangement. Outside the main cabin was a capacious "well," where, when I was standing there with the two men working the boat, there was still room for two or three sitters to dispose themselves comfortably. Round this and behind it, again, the long, overhanging counter gave most commodious deck-room. Such was the boat we proposed to make our temporary home for ten days or so. Use through the summer by constantly varying tenants had not left her, perhaps, quite as clean as one could have wished; but you can't expect proper yacht form in a boat you hire for a few days.

It would seem utterly absurd to take such a boat into the upper reaches of the Thames, and the Yare and the Bure are, roughly speaking, about the same size as the average of the Thames between Teddington and Oxford. They are deeper, having generally a good

depth of water up to the banks, and the flat, open country gives you full advantage of the wind, and consequently greater control over your craft; but, still, with a Thames training, it seems wrong to be tearing along in a twelve-ton boat, raising a swell in the narrow stream that would be very uncomfortable for any row-boat you met. However, there are no row-boats and no locks—nothing but sailing-boats like yourselves, and wherries that average about forty tons, and sometimes run up to ninety.

We cleared out of Wroxham about ten o'clock in the morning, and as the river there is narrow, and enclosed by trees for some miles, we, and the two or three sailing-boats who started with us, could do little more than drift. Wroxham Broad is the finest of all the broads. There is depth of water to go all over it, and room for a spin that will try the qualities of your boat on all points of sailing. We looked longingly at this charming lake as we passed, but we were bound onwards, and could not afford to be seduced by its charms. Soon after passing the entrance to the broad, the river takes a turn which brought the wind abeam, and then began an exhilarating voyage. In reality, it must be admitted that our boat was a tub, and her pace anything but that of a racer; but, with the banks and the rushes tearing past you, the tiller pulling under your hands like a live thing that was fighting with you for the mastery, and the swell from your bows throwing up surging breakers behind you, you have an exciting appearance of speed, whatever your actual pace may be. If the river were crowded—indeed, if there were any row-boats about—you would be an intolerable nuisance, for you make just as much swell as, or more than, a steam-launch, and are far less manageable. You cannot reverse your engines in a moment, as a steamer can.

We had no opportunity of seeing anything of our crew before starting, and had to take them on trust. They consisted of two brothers, one, the sailing-master, about three-and-twenty; the other about nineteen. We were not altogether pleased on going on board to find that the elder had a very unpleasantly sulky expression of face, and that the other was silent and irresponsible. Nor was I reassured at having a difference of opinion, before we had been half an hour under-way, as to my right to do anything but sit in the "well" and watch Tom, the skipper, handle the boat.

After a while, however, he seemed to fall in with my view of the case, that I had chartered the boat for my own amusement and not for his, and peace reigned again in our small world.

The wind lasted us well throughout the afternoon, and by about six o'clock we got down to Yarmouth. The country for the last ten miles or so is not beautiful, nor are the smells pleasant as you near Yarmouth, nor are they agreeable in Yarmouth. Indeed, a more disagreeable place to bring up in for the night than that in which we spent our first night on board the Wild Duck it would be difficult to find. The tide was dead low, and the river reduced, in consequence, to a dirty dribble about forty yards wide. On both sides of us were small houses; ahead and astern of us were wharries; close by us, as we brought up, was a small Una boat, the occupants of which had rigged their tent, and were contentedly preparing their vegetables for dinner. Our men said it was the only possible place for the night, and as we knew nothing of the water, we were entirely in their hands, and had nothing to do but to try both to look and to feel as if we liked it. But it was a difficult matter under the circumstances. Camping out in a four-wheeled cab in St. Giles's is about the nearest thing I can suggest to those who are curious, and want really to know what it was like. You would have, for one thing, the same feeling of uncertainty as to whether the neighbours could see in under the window-blinds or not.

It is wonderful what you can do in a small space, and what an amount of comfort can be got out of it after a while, as those who have sailed in a yacht discover. Size is relative. A comfortable bedroom in a cottage is only a cupboard in a large house, and a cupboard is a comfortable cabin when it is put into a yacht. But your mental eye has to focus itself, and, until it does, you retain the measurements of your previous environment; so that your first night on board a twelve-tonner is apt to be a trifle uncomfortable, particularly when you cannot go overboard for your morning tub.

There were other things also that made our first night on board rather more eventful than is desirable for absolute comfort. The two men had brought the boat round from Norwich to meet us, and during the passage had preferred the sleeping-cabin to their own fore-castle. Otherwise there was nothing effeminate about those young men.

They refused to give way to the demoralising habits that civilisation has imposed on us, such as the regular use of soap-and-water, or even taking off their clothes at night. I gathered this from my observation of them while they were with us, and from the liveliness of our first night on board.

I have myself a real genius for sleep: a lobster-salad the last thing before going to bed, or even an earthquake, will only occasionally disturb me slightly; but as I seldom take either of them, I am not often disturbed. I go to bed to sleep, and when I get there I attend strictly to business. My wife, on the other hand, is easily disturbed. Further, I am a smoker. My wife is not. Most men who smoke have probably discovered that those active pests that Providence has invented, presumably to discourage dirt in human beings, have an objection to the fragrant herb in any shape; they don't even like their victims to taste of it. The consequence was that all the discomfort I had that night was from the half-heard sounds of unrest and occasional ejaculations that issued from the other bunk. And few of us are sufficiently imaginative to enter fully into the sufferings of our fellows.

Next morning broke grey and sombre. Imagine waking in your cab in St. Giles's on a grey morning in the early autumn, and washing on the box under the driving-apron, with a small tin basin as the only substitute for a bath, and you will have a tolerable picture of our first morning on board the Wild Duck. Not that I could have used the largest-sized hip-bath with any degree of comfort, when the occupants of two rows of houses were looking down upon me.

My advice to those who propose to cruise on the Norfolk rivers is that they should avoid lying in Yarmouth for the night. It is better to lose a day, if you cannot do it in any other way. You have to spend the night in the very worst part of a town the best part of which is open to improvement. There is only one absolutely good thing in Yarmouth, and that is the bloaters. Until you have been to Yarmouth you have no idea of the possibilities of the bloater. The ordinary bloater, such as one gets in London, is the deep-sea herring. It is caught at a distance from the port, and has to be salted on board. Very often it is a week or more before it is cured; while the bloaters you get—or can get—at Yarmouth are caught a short

distance from land, and are brought ashore and put in the smoke, within a few hours of their capture. Whoso has not been to Yarmouth has yet another pleasure before him in the first breakfast he eats there. But in order to enjoy this luxury, it is not absolutely necessary to sleep on board a twelve-tonner in the dirty river; and it was with great satisfaction that we found ourselves clear of it, and bowling up the salt-water lagoon that is the connecting link between the Bure, down which we had come, and the Yare, to which we were proceeding. This lagoon, Breydon, is about three miles long by one and a half to two broad. The only navigable part of it is a narrow passage marked out with stakes, outside which you go at the peril of sticking on the mud for an indefinite time. At low water this narrow channel contains all the water left in the creek, but when the tide is up, and the vast mud-banks are covered, it makes an imposing sheet of water. When the wind meets the tide there with any force, it makes a sufficient imitation of a sea to send the spray flying over you as you beat against it, and you get a lively little spin of half an hour or so that comes as a pleasant exhilaration between the two narrow fresh-water streams. From there, too, Yarmouth looks at its best. You feel more kindly disposed towards it when you no longer smell it; and the old red town looks very picturesque as you see it from the expanse of breezy water, glancing in the light of a summer morning, with the red-sailed barges, and the sea-birds round you to enliven the foreground. It gives you a comfortable feeling of satisfaction to come up from breakfast and see such a scene as that, and to hear the crisp sound of the water, and the cheery cheep and rattle of blocks and ropes as the boat beats steadily up against a head-wind.

During our cruise through Breydon, I was strengthened in my belief that the bad name barges bear is given to them undeservedly. When I came on deck a barge that we had caught up was near us on the same tack as ourselves. We had to go about almost immediately, and by that means came across the barge's bow. Tom, our skipper, was at the helm, and, having turned out with a worse temper than that with which he turned in, refused to make any sign of giving way. The barge, not wishing to lose ground either by bearing away or going about a yard sooner than was

absolutely necessary, held on, with the result that in another minute he was on the top of us, smashing our rail, and swinging us round alongside him. Neither boat had much way on at the moment, so that no damage was done beyond that to the rail. That was bad enough, however, and the boat's side might have been stove in for all we could tell till we had examined her; but beyond a mild remonstrance from Tom, made apparently more in sorrow than anger, "You might have kept away a bit, or gone about," no remark was made from either boat. Dukes could hardly have behaved with greater forbearance.

I have seen a good deal of bargees, and have received the most courtly civilities from them. I have also found the most perfect honesty among cabmen—honesty when the temptation to dishonesty was enormous, and detection almost impossible. There is a great deal of human nature in most men. We don't differ very materially whether we drive cabs, or sail barges, or rule kingdoms. If you treat a man as a blackguard, he is a great deal more likely to behave like one than if you pay him the compliment of supposing that he is a human being very much like yourself, and capable of behaving as well. A bargee leads a rough life, and, if you show any signs of wishing to compete with him, can use very rough language; but he also leads a manly, open-air life—one that involves great hardships, and requires great skill, and care, and prudence; and such conditions of life breed corresponding qualities of mind if you will take the trouble to look for them.

When you have made a week or a fortnight's summer cruise round the coast in your comfortable little miniature yacht, getting up and making sail at grey dawn, so as to catch a tide, and beating against an east wind in the chill morning, you feel that you are a better man for it—both your body and your moral nature are braced by the little discipline through which you have put them. But the bargee leads that kind of life all the year round, winter and summer alike. He must be sober, and watchful, and patient; and he is consequently likely to be a better man than one who does not exercise these qualities.

We soon left our over-familiar barge astern, and when, some ten minutes later, we saw her hard and fast on the mud, owing to another piece of clumsy sailing, our men

only smiled grimly, and remarked that "he needn't have been in such a hurry after all"—a reticence that gave me a still better opinion of their manners.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

OUR NEW RECTOR. PART I.

WHEN I listened to the voice of the Rev. Francis Northborough as he recited the Thirty-nine Articles, the first Sunday on which he officiated in the church at Shillingbury, and, thereby, read himself into the benefice, I certainly did not expect to be present at a like function for many years, if ever again. Mr. Northborough was a hale, stalwart man, and, as far as any one could judge, quite likely to hold the living as many years as Dr. Unwin had held it before him; but such was not the hidden purpose of fate. One winter, after he had been with us about ten years, the Rector was confined to the house for several months, and the spiritual direction of the parish given over to a temporary curate. Various reports as to the nature of his ailment went round the town, but no one could say exactly what it was. When he reappeared, however, it was evident that his attack had been a severe one. He was indeed changed from the cool-headed, domineering man who had swooped down upon us and our parochial irregularities ten years ago. He stooped and shuffled as he walked; his memory was clouded, and his speech was thick and muffled. There was no longer any possibility of hiding the truth. He had had a paralytic stroke, and would never be his old self again.

He struggled on through that summer, refusing to allow the curate to do anything except christenings, and burials, and parish visiting, and abbreviating the church services to the utmost extent allowed by the rubrica. Some of his friends bore tales to the bishop that his curtailments went far beyond this; but one day in the autumn he had a second seizure during the morning service. Then he was carried back to the rectory insensible, never again to enter the church till the day when he was taken to be laid in the hallowed earth under the chancel windows, hard by the spot where Dr. Unwin and some half-dozen other rectors were already lying.

But this day, unhappily for him, was long in coming. For five years and more he lingered on, fallen into second childhood. He was wheeled from his bedroom to his

sitting-room and back again, and this was all the change he knew, except on very fine days when his attendant would draw him in his invalid's chair out into the garden and let him sit in the sun; but sun and shade, cold and heat, were much the same to him. He took no heed of change of any sort, or of men or things. He would sit for hours playing with a little bit of string, fumbling aimlessly with his fingers, with a look of piteous helplessness in his glassy eyes. The brain which once worked with the regularity of a well-ordered machine, and fashioned schemes by the dozen for keeping erratic men in orbits as rigidly fixed as those of the planets, was now inert and powerless, and pariah affairs in Shillingbury under the somewhat limp régime of Mr. Shawcross, the curate-in-charge, showed signs of drifting back into the old happy-go-lucky, illogical channel, without anybody seeming to be a penny the worse.

When at last the end came, and Shillingbury was again vacant, there was naturally the usual recurrence of excitement in the combination-room of St. Barabbas College, Cambridge; but the excitement was less keen than it was wont to be in the old days when every fellow took orders as naturally as he drank port, for in these later times the rationalising spirit of the age had made its influence felt even in sanctuaries so well guarded as was the College of Barabbas. A Royal Commission had swept away the provision which made it necessary for every fellow to be at least a deacon, and now as a rule one would find more black ties than white ones dining at the high table; and of the blacks there were some who were, in the estimation of the surviving whites, very black indeed; men who talked of protoplasm and evolution, and slept through the greater part of the service, whenever they deigned to show themselves in the college chapel. Death, too, had been busy amongst the elder clerical fellows, and had lately carried off several who, had they lived on, would have read with mixed feelings the obituary notice of the Rev. Francis Northborough.

And thus it happened that the prize of the college fell to the share of the Rev. Ambrose Mayfield, a man who had been but ten years a fellow. He was little known in the University, for he had never taken any part in college work, having gone immediately after his election to the curacy of a district church in a suburb of one of the great Midland towns. As an undergraduate he had been on speaking

terms with scarcely half-a-dozen men of his college, and his intercourse with his tutors was of the most perfunctory character. To the men he appeared a "smug," a character which would have damned the possessor of all the cardinal virtues, and to the dons a surly, unlicked puritan, who would probably do just as well in the Senate House, if he should be left entirely to his own devices. So left to his own devices he accordingly was.

In his rooms—about the poorest set in college—he had lived the life of a recluse. All the week he read hard, and on Sundays he took his recreation by teaching in a Sunday-school in a village close to Cambridge. Later on rumours got abroad in the college that he used to preach in the fields and on the highways. Perhaps he did. There were forces struggling to be free in the seething depths of his nature, kept back as yet by the timidity of a raw youth and the indecision of a character late to ripen; but they were bound to break forth in time. He presented himself for ordination at the earliest opportunity, and chose as his first field of labour the district of St. Jude's, Sinderby. Sinderby was fabled to be one of the wickedest places in England, and St. Jude's district certainly did not contain the cream of its population. Therefore, it may be assumed that the Rev. Ambrose Mayfield, when he buckled on his armour of faith, did not do so with the idea of serving as a carpet-knight in the forces of the Church Militant, and so it turned out.

The district benefice of St. Jude's, Sinderby, had been the despair of more than one of its incumbents, for the emolument was modest, and the work, if it were to be done effectually, needed one whose strength was as the strength of ten. The present holder had found it hard work to get a curate who was worth anything to stop with him for the stipend he could give. The younger labourers in the vineyard seemed to prefer the work in the more rural fields, where social amenities in the way of croquet, archery, and dinner-parties would come not unfrequently as solace to their toil; and, seeing that they were mere human beings full of faults and failings, there was no great wonder that they should thus choose. The district of St. Jude's lay on the outskirts of Sinderby, by the side of the Midland Canal. It had sprung up suddenly, and looked as if it had not yet decided whether it should figure as town or country. Gaunt rows of houses

had been thrown anyhow across the fields; but the builder had not stopped to clear up the mess he had made, in the process of converting a not very beautiful bit of country into an unspeakably hideous town. Heaps of half-burnt brick, and the debris of a builder's yard, obstructed every thoroughfare. The houses; what yet remained of the trees and hedges; the very earth itself; were black with coal-dust; and the faces of the people one might meet in the streets were of the same hue; but blacker, fouler than all was the cloud of sordid degradation, mental and physical alike, which hung like a pall over the lives of the wretched dwellers in the squalid lanes which branched off from the main street, ending on one side at the towing-path of the canal, and on the other losing themselves in the swampy level of Sinderby Common. Hard by was a canal wharf where the barges unloaded, and from this side there flowed into the parish an element of amphibious life which did not elevate the tone of that with which it mixed, low as this latter was already. On the common, every Sunday, every Good Friday, and every Christmas Day, there would be plenty of pugilism; and in the intervals of rest needed by the human combatants to collect their forces, there would be dog-fighting and rat-killing. Drunkenness, it is scarcely necessary to add, was the inevitable finish to a day's recreation.

Almost in the centre of the district stood the church, a mere shed of corrugated iron; but this was supposed to be only a temporary fabric. In the vestry hung plans and elevations of a florid Gothic structure, the St. Jude's which was to be in the good times coming; and the first time Mayfield's eye fell upon these drawings he breathed a prayer, and half registered a vow, that this fair temple of his faith should rise above the roofs of the surrounding hovels before he himself had done with St. Jude's. The incumbent soon discovered that his new curate was made of finer metal than those with whom he had lately had to work. For the first six months he went on quietly and assiduously, keeping under firm control the impulse to be up and doing, till he should have well in hand all the details of his parish work. Then, little by little, the hidden powers of the man began to make themselves felt, and before a twelve-month had passed he had struck harder and more telling blows at the vice and misery rampant in St. Jude's than had

been dealt by all the spiritual overlookers put together since that district had come into existence. He was not content with preaching at the people from his own standpoint, or opening the church for service at all hours of the day, whether anyone came or not. He went after his people into the miserable dens they called their homes—learnt to know what their sufferings, their struggles, and their aspirations were—and set himself to give them what relief and remedy he could; but for a time the work was one to tax the energies and break the heart of the strongest. It was not the open vice, the violent brutality and profligacy which often made him, when he returned to his lodgings from parish visiting, bury his face in his hands and ask himself whether he was not, after all, trying to weave ropes of sand. It was the stolid indifference to good; the patient, brutish endurance of all the physical and moral squalor in which they grovelled; the acquiescence in their present state of barbarism on the part of the people who had been delivered into his charge; which made him throw himself upon his knees in doubt as to whether these puny efforts of his could ever do more than dissipate the lightest fringe of the dense cloud of ill which hung over the world of spiritual desolation around him; but at the worst, hope never deserted him. He never lost heart, or folded his hands to sleep, while there was work to be done.

Ambrose Mayfield had gone to his task very young, knowing but little of the world and its ways, and absolutely nothing of the lives of the men and women who were to be his charge. Before he had been a month at work, he found that he had much to learn, that his educational course had not come to an end when he was made a bachelor of arts. Very many curates of the ordinary sort never make this discovery, and it is rare, indeed, that such illumination ever comes to one who happens to be likewise the fellow of a college. He had been born and brought up in one of those homes which are becoming scarce—fortunately, some people think—in this contemporary England of ours. His father was a country vicar with a small income and a large family—a stern man, who ruled his household with all the pitiless rigour of a nature originally hard and further soured by the unlovely Calvinistic creed he confessed; but, in spite of this, his wife slaved and toiled for him, his daughters revered him as the wisest

and noblest of mankind; his son had no higher ambition than to follow in his father's steps, and they one and all obeyed him unreasoningly, and loved him at the same time. The wife and girls might eat cold meat for their mid-day meal, and not too much of that; but the head of the house would always find on his plate some hot tit-bit for dinner, and for supper as well. His word on all subjects—temporal as well as spiritual—was law to them; and whenever they might read or listen to words contradicting the dogmas of their domestic pope, they would shudder inwardly and wonder how it was that fire had not fallen from heaven upon the writer or the speaker of such monstrous error. The religious atmosphere of this home hung about the boy when he went direct from his father's tuition to Cambridge. All through his undergraduate career it was there, an estranging veil between him and the more secular and more human influences of the place. Now and then he would be thrown in contact with some others of a like spirit to himself; but, as a rule, he found little pleasure in the society of these: for not one of them ever reached the standard of that teaching which he had so often heard fall from his father's lips. So he would always be glad to get back to his solitary room, his work, and his own thoughts.

But when he went to take up his abode in Sinderby, he found that his days of isolation were past and gone. The work which lay around him was work which would bring him in all his waking hours into contact with his fellows, and, in his first week's experience, he found out how gravely he had erred in failing to learn a little more of men, even if he should thereby have learnt a little less of books. He remembered, too, a certain curate of a parish near his home, a man who was an ardent cricketer, and was accustomed to take an eleven of the lads of his parish almost every Saturday afternoon to play some other rural team. His father, it is true, had never spoken of this young man except with horror, and used to call the doctrines he preached by all the bad names which theologians keep for describing those who differ from them, and up to the present he had concurred in this, as in all the rest of his father's judgments; but by the light of his later experience, doubts as to the infallibility of the family oracle began to assert themselves. Sometimes, as he crossed Sinderby Common, and saw divers

of his own black sheep indulging in their unlovely gambols, he would admit that the lads he had seen in his own county, betting and fielding, with their spiritual director bowling or at the wickets, were in the way of leading better and cleaner lives, though they might have to listen on Sundays to Arminianism, or something worse, than the dog-fighting, bullyragging, drunken crew he saw around him. This admission was rapidly followed by the wish that it lay in his power to play cricket half as well as the Rev. Bailey Block; but with his neglected athletic training, he could no more have stopped a shooter, or have taken a one-handed catch at point, than the cricketing divine above-mentioned could have mastered a paper on Fluxions; and he knew enough of the world to see that a parson should play cricket well, or not at all.

In the church, the first time he ascended the pulpit, there was no one present who could, by any stretching of the term, have been called a working-man; and it seemed that the fifty or sixty people who were present were not over and above impressed by the straight, uncompromising denunciation of all good works, and the explanation of final assurance, upon which he founded his sermon. For weeks he told his hearers the same story, in a slightly varied form, from the pulpit, and in his visiting rounds it was the one theme upon which he would enlarge as soon as he had disposed of the few sentences which he found necessary as spiritual skirmishers in the assault upon the inner stronghold of sin in his hearers' hearts. In his visits he could, of course, expound his doctrines to many who never gave him the chance as members of his congregation; but, somehow or other, none of his parishioners, whether they went to church or stayed away, seemed to be deeply moved by his doctrinal disquisitions, or by his monitions that many would be called and few chosen, or by the comforting assurance that the immense majority of the human race was fore-ordained to perdition.

With most men it is very hard to shake off those beliefs which have been graven upon the fair white tablet of the mind in early youth. It is hard even to admit the fact that there can possibly be anything to be said on the other side of the matter, and so it was with Ambrose Mayfield. For a time he treated these persistent, intrusive doubts as to the universal range and utility of his father's teaching, as so many direct whippers

of the evil one; but, fortunately for himself and for the people given over to his care, he possessed a quick gift of sympathy—an inheritance from his kindly mother—in which his father failed entirely. When he saw the mass of evil he was called upon to hurl out of his path, he thought chiefly of the task and comparatively little of the means he might have to use. Wonderful the power there is in a name! Had any one told Ambrose Mayfield that he was working on the lines laid down by Francis Xavier, he would have given an indignant denial, but the charge would have been true, nevertheless. He did not, like so many of his kind, love his formal creed better than righteousness. When, after many a severe mental struggle, he had come to the conclusion that the sword with which he had hoped to hew his way through the ranks of his foes was blunt and inefficient, he cast it aside, and used the stock of worldly wisdom, which he had gathered since his entrance into active life, to aid him in the choice of a new weapon.

Long before this he had been forced to confess to himself that, whatever mark he might make, must be made on the generation to come. Those who had grown up under the pressure of existing influences were almost beyond hope of reclamation, and, as luck would have it, a chance came before long which gave him a better start than he had ever hoped for. In Sinderby there was living a certain Joe Swainson, an iron-moulder, who, up to the present time, had certainly not been looked upon as an ally of the forces working for good in the parish. Swainson was neither a drunkard nor a profligate. No man in the town spoke more strongly against the swinish excesses of his fellow-workers; but such utterances as these told little in his favour, seeing that he was a professed infidel and a socialist.

Swainson was a widower with only one child, a handsome, intelligent lad of thirteen or thereabouts. He was one of the most promising pupils in the National School, for his father, though he denounced priests and parsons as the enemies of the human race, was not too proud to avail himself of the educational advantages they proffered. One day, when the curate happened to be in the school while the children were being dismissed, he noticed young Swainson hanging about with a roll of papers in his hand. There was a look on the boy's face which told that he had something to say, and when Mr. Mayfield asked him what

were the papers he had in his hand, he brought out a series of difficult problems in applied mathematics and asked the curate for some explanation of them. There was, he said, an office vacant in a neighbouring railway-station for which he was anxious to compete; but he had learnt that no one who was unable to do problems such as these would have any chance. He could partially understand them, but he was stopped on the brink by difficulties of which the books he had by him gave no solution, so he thought he would ask Mr. Mayfield to help him.

The curate, after glancing at the papers, told the boy to come to his rooms that evening, and in less than a fortnight young Swainson was appointed to the coveted post. This was the foundation of the St. Jude's night-school, and it was something else. It was an indication to the people that their parson was a man to help them on in this world on week days, as well as to talk about the next on Sundays. There was soon a good choir running parallel with the night-school, and out of these sprang the working-man's club. Of all these Mayfield was the guiding spirit; and, when half-a-dozen years had passed, he had ample cause for congratulation as to the result of his work. The iron church was now filled every Sunday, and whispers were heard that the new one would soon be begun. Mr. Moles, a great ironworker of the district, was understood to be in favour of the scheme, and with Mr. Moles, ways and means were never an obstacle worth considering. The upshot was, that in an incredibly short space of time—as time goes in church-building—the new fabric was built, consecrated, and opened.

And with the new church there came a new departure in the matter of church services. In the days of which I am treating, church millinery was yet far from the point which it has reached in these later times, and what was almost Roman then, would be regarded nowadays as very milk-and-water usage. When the new church was opened, Mayfield put his choir into surplices, and made all his services as musical as the rubric would allow. Young Mr. Moles was at Oxford at the time, and was furthermore affected with a mild attack of what was then known in Protestant circles as the "Oxford taint." He was willing to spend freely on lecterns, and coronæ, and flower-vases, and candlesticks. Mayfield's policy was to make his church as bright, and warm, and pretty as he

could; as different as possible from the houses in which his people dwelt; and, being large-minded and sympathetic enough to rate these non-essentials at their real and not at their conventional value, he accepted them and preached his practical, plain duty sermons in his highly decorated church, as efficiently as he would have done in a cube with four whitewashed walls.

Sinderby was a hundred miles and more from the old home, where his father still sat nursing his pitiless creed, and mumbling out on Sundays the denunciations which he strung together during the week; but the news of his son's backsliding travelled over the intervening leagues and came to the father's ears. As soon as he learnt the full extent of his son's fall, he sat down to write, fortified by a morning's study of Newton and Toplady, and sent off a letter of many sheets full of exhortations, and warnings, and threats, the latter predominating. Ambrose replied, writing in a strain of dutiful affection, telling his father the whole story of his mental struggle, of his change of opinion, and of the blessings which had crowned his work; but this was hardly the way to touch the old man's heart. He wrote next in anger; and the son, whose filial love had been in no way lessened by the opening of his eyes, was much distressed. The first time he had leisure he went over to his old home, hoping to set matters straight, but he would have done better to stay at Sinderby. The old man received him with churlish coldness, and a mild, piteous, reflected wrath shone from the eyes of the woman-folk as they looked at their lost sheep, who had actually decorated his church with flowers, and preached a sermon in his surplice. Text after text was hurled at his head, and jibes and jeers at his impertinence and boyish presumption were not wanting as the contention grew keener. At last the ripe theologian, the disciple of the patient Galilean, lost his temper, and ordered his son out of the house, telling him not to enter it again till he should be ready to eat every word he had let fall since he had crossed the threshold.

Ambrose Mayfield went back to his work with a heavy heart at first, but what he had just gone through made him set his face like a flint, and—to use a boating metaphor—put his back into his work as he had never done before. He attacked Mr. Moles boldly, and let him have no rest till he had pulled down two or three streets of miserable hovels, which stood below the

level of the canal, and had erected as many comfortable cottages on a better site. The working-man's club, which had by this time outgrown its limits, was newly housed in a handsome building, and attracted a good portion of the coming generations, and side by side with this there came a certain "accentuation" in the ritual of the church. The choir came out one Easter in violet cassocks, and a grand processional hymn astonished all, and scandalised a few of the parishioners one Sunday evening. By degrees the church of St. Jude's at Sinderby, for good or evil, gathered to itself the reputation of being one of the most advanced churches in the diocese.

Thus, when we Shillingbury folks learnt that for the future our spiritual guidance was to be committed to the care of the senior curate of the church above-named, a thrill of apprehension ran through us, for we were Protestant to the backbone. Antony Merridew, a young fellow with a turn for joking, regaled his aunt, Miss Cushing, who acted as Miss Dalgairns's second in command in spiritual warfare, with an account of a high church service he had seen in London, and bade her prepare for something of the same kind in Shillingbury.

Whenever two people were seen talking together, it would be fairly certain that incense, or auricular confession, or candlesticks, were among the subjects they were discussing. The more deeply read let drop hints about Martin Luther and transubstantiation and the seven bishops; while commonplace folk were of opinion that the times of bloody Mary and the Popish plot were about to return. We heard of noones, and compline, and octaves, and of wonderful vestments called by strangely-sounding names. Altogether, the air was grown electric, and it seemed as if the first match struck to light the new altar-candles would certainly bring about an explosion. The prospect of a doctrinal and ritualistic revolution was no doubt a thing of terror to many of us; but I do not believe it was the only, or the chief source of our discomposure. Shillingbury had enjoyed a forty years' spell of low church rule under Dr. Unwin, followed by fifteen years of no church in particular under the Rev. Francis Northborough, and we seemed to have fared as well under one régime as under the other; so there was no certainty that a slight dose of high church treatment would hurt us. What disturbed the parochial mind more than anything was the remembrance of the general upsetting

which had followed Mr. Northborough's coming, of being dragged neck and crop out of our comfortable, old-fashioned ways—abuses, he was pleased to call them—and set up in the fierce and not over kindly light of county opinion. During Mr. Northborough's illness, the curate-in-charge had been somewhat of a *roi fainéant*, and things were already beginning to glide back into the old ways quite pleasantly; so the prospect of another new broom, who, for all we knew, might sweep even cleaner than his predecessor, was rather a stunning blow.

Miss Dalgairns, who was the first to sound the alarm, made known her intention, at the first step Romewards on the part of the new rector, of sending for her cushions and hassocks, and betaking herself every Sunday to Pudsey, where, since the disappearance of the Rev. Onesiphorus Tulke, a new divine of unimpeachable character and opinions had been installed by Mr. Winsor. She even went so far as to send to London for a bundle of anti-Roman tracts, which she scattered broadcast about the parish, hoping that the antidote, though given before the poison, would be none the less efficient in its operation on that account. The present bishop of the diocese, who was suspected of being a Tractarian in disguise, was understood to be greatly pleased at the prospect of numbering the Rev. Ambrose Mayfield amongst his clergy, so there was little hope that our new rector would be deterred by the frown episcopal from bringing in his perilous innovations. We tried to realise the worst at once, and in the doleful forecast of the time to come, we sighed for the good old days of Bishop Chicham and of the Rev. Francis Northborough.

It is in the nature of things, parochial as well as political, that reaction is provoked by any very decided or strenuous movement in a particular direction, and before Mr. Mayfield came into residence he had the support of a party in the parish, a very unassuming and not very numerous one, it is true, made up of a few advocates of fair play, and certain unmarried members of the weaker sex, who may, or may not, have been influenced in their partisanship by the fact that the new rector was young, not ill-looking, and unfurnished as yet with a wife. Jonas Harper early announced his intention of going with the stream, and professed high satisfaction that at length there would be a chance of having a musical service according to the true spirit of the rubrics; but this new-born formalism in

honest Jonas provoked a little surprise and some suspicion as well, and his enemies declared that the prospect of an increase of salary on account of possible extra duty at the organ had prompted him to range himself on our new rector's side, quite as much as any artistic longings after a musical service rubrically correct in all its details.

"THE BOY JONES."

THE name of the hero of the present memoir is, to most of the present generation, almost unknown, and probably but very few of their parents can call to mind the nature of the exploits that rendered this boy famous, over forty years since. The narrative of the incidents which led to his notoriety has never been fully put before the public, and as he is not to be met with in literature, except, perhaps, by a casual reference to him in Mr. Walford's book on Old and New London, it is only by delving into the newspapers of the period that we can find the materials for his history. It is, therefore, with the hope of rescuing from total oblivion the memory of one who was, during his brief career, the most notorious person of his time, and to preserve the record of his almost sublime audacity, that these lines are written.

It is in the unromantic atmosphere of a London police-court that we are first introduced to the boy Jones. On the 14th of December, 1838, at the Queen Square Police Court (now transferred to that of Westminster), a lad about fifteen years of age, who gave his name as Edward Cotton, and whose dress was that of a sweep, was charged with being found in the Marble Hall of Buckingham Palace under circumstances of an extraordinary nature.

The Palace at that time, even during the absence of the Queen, was guarded by the gentleman porters of the establishment, aided by the police, and sentries of the Guards, but, in spite of this threefold precaution, a number of persons managed, somehow, at various times, to find their way into the Palace under unaccountable circumstances. In this instance, the boy was detected by one of the porters in the Marble Hall, and, after an exciting chase, was captured by the police in James's Street. In the lobby were found a regimental sword, a quantity of linen, and other articles, all of which had been purloined from the Palace. The sword was the property of the Hon. Augustus Murray,

a gentleman attached to the Queen's household, and on his entering his bedroom the bedding was found covered with soot, the prisoner having evidently endeavoured to get up the chimney in order to effect his escape. Two letters were found upon him, one belonging to Her Majesty, and the other to Mr. Murray; also a quantity of bear's-grease, with part of which he had anointed his face.

His story, as told by himself, certainly was a curious one, but it lacked one great merit—truth. He said that twelve months previously he came from Hertfordshire, and met a man in a fustian jacket, who asked him to go with him to Buckingham Palace; he went, and remained there ever since. He declared that all the time he was in the Palace he fared very well indeed, and was always placed, when the Queen had a meeting with Ministers, behind a piece of furniture in the room, and heard all that passed. He answered all the questions put to him very shrewdly, and appeared to have some education.

At his next examination (five days after) all his story was proved to be but a tissue of falsehoods. He turned out to be the son of an industrious tailor, named Jones, residing in Westminster, and was in the employ of a builder, to whom he had frequently expressed his intention to enter the Palace under any circumstances, and to see the Queen and hear her sentiments when the Council was assembled.

He obtained admission into the building by squeezing himself through a hole in the Marble Arch at the principal entrance of the Palace, having avoided, by some means, the attention of the sentry. By covering his face and hands with soot and bear's-grease, he had the appearance of a sweep, and, therefore, was enabled to move about the buildings without much suspicion. At his trial he was most ably defended by his counsel, Mr. Prendergast, who turned the whole affair into ridicule, and the jury returned a verdict of Not Guilty, regarding the escapade in the light of a youthful folly, and being also mindful of the fact that the boy did not enter the Palace for the purpose of theft.

One would have thought that such a narrow escape would have had a sobering effect on the youth, but his ambition was by no means satisfied, and, two years later, he was again in the hands of justice for the same offence.

On Wednesday, the 2nd of December, 1840, the inmates of Buckingham Palace

were, shortly after midnight, aroused by an alarm being given that a stranger had been discovered under the sofa in Her Majesty's dressing-room, and the officers of the household were quickly on the alert. It was soon ascertained that the alarm was not without foundation, and the daring intruder was immediately secured, and safely handed over to the tender mercies of the police. The report of the occurrence spread very rapidly, and created the most lively interest in London, as it was feared that the consequent alarm might be attended with most dangerous effects to the health of the Queen, who had been confined only eleven days previously. Happily, neither mother nor child suffered in any way.

The facts, as far as could be gathered—the examination being a private one, conducted by the Privy Council—seem to have been as follows: Shortly after midnight one of Her Majesty's pages, accompanied by other domestics of the royal household, was summoned into Her Majesty's dressing-room, which adjoined the bed-chamber in which the Queen's accouchement had taken place, by Mrs. Lilly, the nurse, who, though she heard a noise in the night, no search was made, and, under the sofa, on which Her Majesty had been sitting only about two hours previously, they discovered a dirty, ill-looking fellow, who was immediately dragged from his hiding-place, and given into custody. The prisoner was searched, but nothing of a dangerous nature was found upon him, and the police at once recognised their captive as the Edward Jones, who had two years previously entered the Palace in such a mysterious way. He is described as being very short for his age, seventeen; and of a most repulsive appearance, but he was apparently unconscious of this defect, as he affected an air of great consequence, and repeatedly requested the police to address him in a becoming manner, also behaving with the greatest nonchalance at his examination before the Privy Council the next day.

His first version of the matter was this: On Monday night, 30th of November, he scaled the wall of Buckingham Palace, about half-way up Constitution Hill; he then proceeded to the Palace, and gained an entry through one of the windows. He had not, however, been long there when he considered it unsafe for him to stay, as so many people were moving about: and he left by the same manner as

he entered. The next day, Tuesday, about nine o'clock in the evening, he again effected an entrance by the same means as before. He then went on to state that he remained in the Palace the whole of Tuesday night, all Wednesday, and up to one o'clock on Thursday morning, when the inquisitive youth was captured. He was not satisfied with this dull and prosaic account of his entry, but, on the following day, he tried to invent something marvellous, and alleged that he ascended the roof of the Palace, and got down the chimney; but there were no marks of soot on his person, and his first story was doubtless the correct one.

The greatest mystery attending the affair was, how he could have found his way to the rooms adjoining that in which Her Majesty slept without being observed. The delinquent stated that during the day he secreted himself under different beds, and in cupboards, until at length he gained an entrance into the dressing-room; he, moreover, alleged that he had sat upon the throne, that he saw the Queen, and heard the Princess Royal cry, but his story was such a romance that no reliance could be placed upon it. He was extremely reticent as to the cause of his intrusion into the Palace, the only explanation which he vouchsafed on being arrested was, that he wanted to see what was going on in the Palace that he might write about it, and, if discovered, he should be as well off as Oxford—a man who had previously shot at the Queen—who fared better in Bedlam than he, Jones, did out of it. Even the stern discipline of the treadmill, to which he was promptly consigned, failed to extract anything more out of him; his only remark, when interrogated, being that he had got into the scrape and must do the best he could.

His father stated that in his belief, his unfortunate son was not of sound mind; but the medical evidence went to show that, though his head was of a most peculiar formation, he was not insane. The Council, therefore, came to the decision that it would be better to inflict a summary punishment, and he was committed to the House of Correction as a rogue and vagabond for three months.

If he is to be believed, he fared remarkably well whilst in his royal residence, as he said he helped himself to soup and other eatables from a room, which he called the "cook's kitchen," but no dependence whatever could be placed on his word.

Prince Albert was taking leave of Her Majesty for the night, when the miscreant was discovered, and the Prince hearing a noise proceeding from the adjoining apartment, opened the door and ascertained the cause; but it was not made known to the Queen till the following day, so as to prevent any undue alarm on her part.

It is needless to say this event excited the greatest interest, and engrossed public attention; nothing else being talked of. The punishment was considered far too light to deter a repetition of the offence, which opinion was subsequently justified by events later on. Such an occurrence, of course, was considered fair material for the humorists of the day to exercise their wit upon, and there are many allusions to it in the *Age* and *Satirist* of the period; but, as their remarks are not always conceived in the best taste, they are better left in the obscurity in which they now dwell. Perhaps, however, this little couplet from the *Satirist* may be excepted:

Now he in chains and in the prison-garb is
Mourning the crime that couples Jones with
darbies.

It was Jones's extraordinary powers of finding an entrance into the palace, that caused Samuel Rogers to declare that he must be a descendant of the illustrious In-igo.

For this "Boy Jones" the prison evidently had no terrors; he was liberated from Tothill Fields on the 2nd of March, 1841, and almost immediately set to work to repeat his former escapades. On the day previous to his liberation, he was visited by Mr. Hall, the magistrate, who tried to persuade him to go to sea; but Jones made certain conditions which could not be acceded to, and he did not go. This gave an opportunity for the *Satirist* to come out with the following appropriate lines:

The impudent urchin, whom sure the devil owns,
And Government wants to send into the navy,
Will not go to sea—and 'tis cunning of Jones,
Who thus may avoid his relation, Old Davy.

He was then delivered into the care of his parents, with strict injunctions to them to watch his actions, and for some days his conduct was unexceptionable; he frequently attended a Methodist chapel, and expressed his intention of joining a teetotal society. But the charms of notoriety were too strong for him, and again he was drawn, as it were by a magnet, to Buckingham Palace. Indeed, it possessed such attractions for him, that, when required to pledge himself, before leaving prison, not to

visit the Palace again, he said he would not promise, as his curiosity was so great.

On the 15th of March, 1841, shortly after one a.m., the sergeant of police on duty at the Palace imagined, as he was going along the grand hall, that he saw some one peeping through the glass door, and this turned out to be the case, for, on his approach, Jones ran against him, and was, of course, immediately secured. In consequence of his previous visits, two extra policemen had been appointed, whose duty it was, on alternate nights, to watch all the staircases and interior of the building, and it was owing to this arrangement that Master Jones was stopped early in his career on this last occasion.

Like most boys, Jones had a keen appreciation of a feast, all the more enjoyable because irregularly come by; and when he was arrested, he was found to have been sitting at his ease in one of the royal apartments, regaling himself with some cold meat and potatoes, which he had conveyed upstairs in his handkerchief. On being questioned how he had obtained an entrance, his reply was, "The same way as before;" and he boasted, moreover, that he could, at any time he pleased, get into the Palace; but he was extremely taciturn, and refused to satisfy curiosity, more particularly on this point. What he confessed at his examination by the Privy Council is not known, as the proceedings were in private, reporters being excluded, and the public were left in possession of only the above bare facts. He persisted that the only motive for his intrusion was to hear the conversation at Court, and to write an account of it; but this plea of simplicity did not save him from a repetition of his old sentence of three months' imprisonment at the House of Correction, with the uncomfortable addition of hard labour this time. Perhaps the best punishment for this juvenile edition of Paul Pry would have been that suggested by the *Satirist* in the following paragraph: "As the urchin Jones, in a letter to his father, stated that his reason for entering the Queen's house was to 'seek for noose in order to rite a book,' it is a matter of general regret that, instead of magnifying the affair into Home Office importance, the young rogue was not accommodated with a rope's-end."

This third entrance into the Palace naturally caused great excitement, and formed an all-engrossing subject of conversation for a long time afterwards. The

public demanded the most rigid and searching enquiry to be made into the circumstances, to prevent other "Boy Joneses" imitating the "rogue and vagabond" in Tothill Fields, and the result was the appointment of three additional sentries to the Palace.

Of Master Jones's subsequent career very little is really known, beyond that, strange to say, an attempt was made to excite public sympathy in his favour. It appears that several benevolent people endeavoured to find him some useful occupation, which should divert him from his palace-exploring mania, and, as he had cunning enough to represent himself as an involuntary actor in the scheme, this was considered as a case of oppression. "It is believed," says the Annual Register for 1841, "that he finally served, voluntarily, or involuntarily, on board one of Her Majesty's ships of war, and it is to be hoped that the strict discipline of the service may teach him better manners." Be that as it may, his curious propensity seems to have been cured, as we hear no more of him as an unwelcome guest at Buckingham Palace.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XIX. DARKNESS AT COMO.

WHEN Ada said in her letter to Gerald that Mr. Warren's manners were worse than ever, she was, perhaps, a little hard on the poor man, who admired her extremely; who thought her shyness, as he supposed it, the prettiest thing in the world; and who wished to make her like him as much as possible. His perceptions were so blunt—perhaps that was not his fault altogether—that he did not feel or realise her hearty personal dislike to himself, which provoked Clarence more and more as the days went on, and he began to see that Ada would be as unmanageable as Gerald. He did not tell Warren this, but joined rather sardonically in all his plans for Ada's amusement, only trying to check him a little when he began to buy presents for her.

"Take my advice, and keep all that till you get to Milan," he said. "You'll only startle her; she won't know what you mean, and she won't like it."

"Perhaps you're right," said Warren, rather disappointed. "She is different from other girls, certainly. It is about time, though, for her to know what I mean."

"I don't advise you to startle her," repeated Mr. Litton.

Warren laughed, and packed among his own possessions the Swiss carvings, the little gold watch, and various trifles in jewellery, which he had bought in Basle and Lucerne for Ada.

He was a little troubled in his mind by her dismal looks; it sometimes struck him that she did not care at all for any of the things they showed her. He had a floating idea that Clarence was not very kind to her; to be sure, her brother ought to have known how to manage her; but Mr. Warren thought he could have done it better in his own way, after all, and he tried to make up for Clarence's deficiencies by those extra attentions which made poor Ada more miserable than ever.

After staying a few days at Lucerne, they had travelled on to Como, arriving there late on a pouring wet day. Ada thought she would never forget that evening. The rain cleared off after dinner, and they took her for a walk through the town, which seemed to be crowded with fierce, dark-faced people, pushing along under the shadows of the arcades. The voices sounded loud, and wild, and angry. As they came back to the hotel, a crowd was collected at the corner of the square, yelling like savages, with two men fighting in the middle of them. Clarence kept her hand fast in his arm, and she knew she was quite safe, but she longed to be in her own room. Mr. Warren was vastly amused with all the noise and tumult; he stood on the edge of the crowd laughing, and calling the Italians many names in English; fortunately for him they were too much interested to take any notice. The wet, the darkness, the shining trails of light across the square—all added to the desolate wildness of the scene. Ada was frightened, tired, and miserable; she thought of home and England with a kind of despair. As Clarence took her into the hotel, she asked him whether they were going to stay long in this dreadful town, and where they were going next.

"You don't care for Italy, then," said Clarence.

"Italy isn't all like this, I hope," said Ada with a slight quiver in her voice.

"Perhaps not; but this is a most beautiful place by daylight. If the sun shines to-morrow, you will want to stay a week."

"No, I shall not. I hate Como. Where are we going, Clarence?" she said, standing still in the glazed court of the hotel.

and clasping both hands round his arm.

He looked down rather sullenly into the fair, anxious little face.

"What a bore girls are with their curiosity!" he said. "What can it matter to you? You have seen nothing. Don't be a baby. Ask Mr. Warren, if you want to know; he is master of the ceremonies."

Clarence expected that this advice would send her flying away to her room, for Warren had just followed them into the court. He was full of the fight going on outside.

"Why did you run away, Litton? The little fellow punished the big one in first-rate style, I can tell you. Perhaps Miss Fane was frightened, though?"

"It was not exactly a sight for girls," said Clarence.

"Mr. Warren," said Ada, going forward to him suddenly, with an eager appeal in her blue eyes which took his breath away, as he reflected afterwards, "my brother says you can tell me where we are going when we leave Como."

"He knows himself; won't he tell you?" said Warren rather oddly.

"He said I could ask you."

"Well, our natural course is to Milan. That was where I started from to meet you, and I made arrangements to go back there. But if you would prefer a tour in any other direction, you have only to say so."

"Oh no," said Ada, shaking her head, and looking away from him.

"Then Milan it shall be," said Warren. "I must say I should like to see you look more cheerful about it. It's your brother's temper, isn't it, that spoils all the fun? I hope he'll mend it at Milan, or else I shall propose that we get rid of him. In my opinion you are a very charming young lady, and all the goodness of your family has found its way into you."

Clarence smiled under his thick moustache as he stood by, and heard this little conversation. Mr. Warren's obliging expressions seemed to be quite thrown away on Ada, who turned from him without a word, and went away to her room.

The next morning Como was bathed in brilliant sunshine. The lake, the hills, the old squares and arcades of the town, all were as cheerful and beautiful as they had been dark, and gloomy, and dismal, the evening before; the people who lounged about on the quays and in the streets looked lazy and good-humoured; their

the sky. Ada no longer felt afraid of Como; she came downstairs early with two letters in her hand, which she intended to post, herself. Clarence had been too disagreeable at Lucerne, and had put every hindrance in the way of her writing to Gerald.

"Whither away so early, Miss Fane?" said Mr. Warren, with the flourishing air that she especially disliked.

The sight of him was very annoying; she had imagined that neither he nor Clarence would be down yet, and here he was smoking at the hotel door in the sunshine, looking red, and sleek, and good-natured, staring at her with the approving eyes which always made her angry.

"I was going to the post with my letters," Ada replied stiffly.

"What, all alone?"

"Yes, all alone," she said, and she walked past him into the square.

"Come, that won't do, you know; we're not at Deerpurst," said Warren, following her.

Ada flashed round upon him with the pride and passion of a child.

"I wish to go alone," she said, standing still, and looking him in the face. "Don't come with me, if you please. Go back; I can find the post-office myself."

Warren looked at her, and then at his cigar; he screwed up his mouth in a sort of consternation. Ada turned her back upon him and began to walk away, but he immediately followed her.

"Did you hear what I said?" exclaimed the girl, standing still once more.

"Yes, I heard," said Warren, gravely enough. "I don't wish to vex you, but a girl shouldn't walk about alone in these countries, especially when she has a face like yours. That's what I meant by saying we were not at Deerpurst. As your brother chooses to lie in bed, it is my duty to see that you are not annoyed."

"But you annoy me yourself," said Ada.

"Sorry for it," he answered with a queer smile.

She looked round, with a sort of despair, at the houses, at the lake, at the two letters she held in her hand; then, with a quick, impatient movement, her eyes suddenly filling with tears, she turned to go back to the hotel. Warren followed her, and stopped her on the stairs. She would not look at him now; she could not, indeed, for crying. Of course he saw the tears very well, and his manner, which had not been rough all along, became a good deal gentler.

"I say, Miss Fane," he exclaimed, "I didn't know I was such a brute as that comes to. Ask Clarence; he'll tell you I'm right—he will, really. Shake hands and be friends, now, and give me your letters to post. I'll take them this moment."

Something told Ada that the odious man was in earnest, and that she might trust him. She put out her little hand with the letters in it; he gave it a rough squeeze as he took them. She hurried away to her room, and, looking out of the window, saw him walking across the square; but the effect of his magnanimity was rather spoilt by the fact that he was reading the directions on her letters as he went along.

Soon after breakfast they strolled to the cathedral. As they came near to the great west door, a sound of soft music and voices told them that service was going on. As a rule, this would not at all have hindered Mr. Warren from going in and walking about with his guide-book, making audible remarks, quite careless of disturbing other people's devotion; but to-day he had something else in his head. He observed that one church was just like another, and told Clarence he wanted to talk to him.

"Would you like to go in and hear the music?" said Clarence to his sister. "I will join you presently."

Ada was only too glad. The sun outside was very hot. She crept thankfully into the solemn shade and coolness of the cathedral.

The air was dim with incense; the chanting rose and fell; the church was full of a great dark crowd of people on their knees. It felt like a refuge to this lonely, frightened little soul, hardly knowing what she was afraid of. She, too, knelt down, having stepped gently to a quiet place away from the people, near one of the side-altars, where Luini's beautiful St. Sebastian stands, all pierced with arrows.

"I could never have borne that," thought Ada. "I should have given in, and done what they pleased—I should, poor little coward!—Oh, I wish I had somebody to take care of me. Oh, mother—Gerald!"

She thought of somebody else, too, as she hid her face, and longed to be back in England. She had written to Gerald to-day, and another letter to the friend who had told her to come to her in any trouble. She had hardly known what to say, but had just told Theo the facts of the case. Theo was quite clever enough to understand it all. Ada did not quite

know herself why she was so anxious and troubled.

Presently the people began to go out of the cathedral. Then she looked up and saw Clarence standing near her, with the sacristan in the background.

"Have you done your prayers?" said Clarence. "Here are some pictures to look at. No; I don't care for St. Sebastian. He's always the same, looks like a pin-cushion. I believe those martyrdoms were awfully exaggerated, and the persecutions altogether. Well, I don't think these pictures are worth much. I don't care for your Ferraris and Luinis; I like a good Titian."

"I like these; they are not so hard to understand," said Ada.

"I dare say they are very well suited to your little mind," said Clarence. "Come round here; I want to talk to you."

Some other people were going on with the sacristan, and the brother and sister walked away into the nave.

"Shall we go outside?" said Ada.

The air was still full of incense, the echo of chanting had hardly died away. Clarence and his talk were almost too much out of tune with it all.

"You have been writing to Gerald?" he said to her.

His tone was not exactly unkind, but hard and a little mocking. "You poor little fool!" it seemed to say; "do you think you will manage your own affairs so easily?"

"Yes," Ada answered quietly; she did not feel quite so much afraid now. "I wrote two letters last night, and Mr. Warren posted them this morning; at least, he said he would."

"He did, of course," said Clarence. "Why shouldn't he? You flatter him with your doubts."

"Mr. Warren is not always very nice," she said; "but I did not doubt him this morning."

"You wrote to somebody else, besides Gerald?"

"Yes; to Miss Meynell," said Ada, flushing slightly.

"I did not know she was a correspondent of yours," said Clarence very dryly. "However, she doesn't matter—but pray what did you tell Gerald?"

"I told him—different things. I told him we were going on to Milan," said Ada, with sudden courage. "I wanted him to know. Why shouldn't he know, Clarence? Why shouldn't I write to him every day, if I like?"

"Because you are in my hands, and I don't like," he answered with a smile. "Now, I bet you, Miss Ada, you asked Gerald to come to Milan and join us there."

"I asked him to come and take me home," said Ada in a low voice.

"But why? What a hopeless, discontented little idiot you are! Here are we two, doing all in our power to enlarge your mind and make you enjoy yourself, and you are such an ungrateful, stupid, dull little thing, that you do nothing but pine for England and that sulky fool of a Gerald. Look here, Ada, tell me at once, what is it that makes you unhappy?"

Ada looked up to the roof, away into the dim, mysterious choir; her sad perplexity would have touched a harder heart than Clarence's. He felt sorry for the child, regretting that he had ever mixed himself up in this business, wondering whether she really had any idea of the future. He half wished that he could get out of it, and take her back to England; but no, there was too much at stake. Warren would have the power of punishing him too severely. It occurred to him that perhaps he had better change his tactics with Ada—bullying might not, after all, be the best way of managing her. Kindness was not an effort, for he was really fond of her; only it made him feel rather more of a rascal than before. He put his hand on her shoulder and said in a different tone:

"Look here, little one. I thought you liked coming abroad with me. You were jolly enough at first, and I thought you were pleased."

"I did like it, Clarence, as long as it was only you."

"Silly child! what makes you so unkind to poor old Warren? He admires you a great deal more than you deserve. He wants to do everything to amuse you, and to show you everything worth seeing. He would spend his money right and left, if I would let him, on doing things for you, and he is quite dismal when he thinks you are not enjoying yourself."

Ada made no answer, except by a slight shrug and a little face.

"There are other reasons why you should not be rude to Warren," said Clarence

gently. "He has been my friend for years, you know, the best I ever had. If I am getting on at all, I owe it to him. I owe him more than I can ever tell you, and so does Gerald, though he dislikes him and has prejudiced you against him."

"No, he didn't," said Ada. "I disliked him quite by myself, and Gerald told me to be civil to him."

"Yes, of course, you are grown up now, and you ought to have good manners. I don't say whether your dislike is reasonable or the other way; but a well-bred woman, if she has dislikes, doesn't show them. I think you might remember that. Besides, I may tell you that Warren is not dense, he's rather sensitive; he sees your dislike, and it hurts his feelings. And if you were to offend him seriously he might quarrel with me, and then I should be ruined, and Gerald too. So you see there's every argument in favour of civility. It's both polite and politic," said Clarence, much pleased with himself, for Ada had listened to all this attentively.

"Well," she said with a little sigh, "I'll try to behave better. I'm sorry if I have vexed you, but I do hope Gerald will come to Milan."

Clarence's eyes became angry; he stroked his moustache and frowned.

"Perhaps he may," he said, after a moment.

Early the next morning a large carriage came to the door of the Hotel Volta. The three travellers, the luggage, and Mr. Warren's courier were all packed into it, and it rolled away through the narrow Como streets, out into the open country.

Ada asked whether they were not going to Milan by railway. Her brother answered:

"There are many ways to Milan."

Mr. Warren sat silent and rather sulky in the corner.

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A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XLII. EFFECT OF THE NEWS AT THE KEEP.

THE second edition of the Ryecote Herald contained a glowing account of Archie's heroism, described as the denouement—startling as a transformation-scene—of the Anastasian romance.

Sir Arthur Denzil, who was again staying at The Keep, got hold of a copy, which he forthwith carried back from Ryecote exultant. It would be good news for Dick, and put him in a better temper than that he now showed generally to his guest. In truth, Sir Arthur was becoming as intolerable to Dick as he was becoming agreeable to Mrs. Tuck.

Let a man be assured a picture is by Rubens, and the fulsome flesh and colour, which, on the canvas of a nameless painter, would have seemed to him gross, will strike him as sumptuous and superb. So of Sir Arthur Denzil's manners. Assured of the immemorial lineage, etc., he claimed, most people would think his manner all grace, graciousness, and geniality; but let them suppose him a bagman, and they would resent the self-same manner as florid, flippant, and insufferably familiar. This explains the difference between the views of Sir Arthur held by Dick and by his aunt. Mrs. Tuck, believing in his blue blood, thought his manners perfect; Dick, doubting it, thought them vulgar. By the way, one of Dick's chief reasons for doubting his friend's blue blood is worth mentioning as characteristic of him. Sir Arthur seemed to have Greek and Latin at his fingers' ends. In truth, he knew only one or two books in these tongues, but, as he made great parade of

his knowledge, his learning seemed to Dick prodigious—much too great to be consistent with his claim to blue blood, for Dick held with Lord Foppington, "To mind the inside of a book is to entertain oneself with the forced product of another man's brain. Now, I think a man of quality and breeding may be much better diverted with the natural sprouts of his own." Doubting, therefore, Sir Arthur's blue blood, Dick was nauseated with the familiarity of his manner, which, however, he could not resent as he would, for many reasons. On the other hand, Sir Arthur could not resent Dick's ill-concealed impatience of him, for many reasons, and specially and immediately for two. He wished to extract a note of introduction to an Irish peer which Dick had promised, and an instalment of the debt due to him from Dick.

"I think your friend has about done for himself here now, Brabazon," cried Sir Arthur exultingly.

"Who's my friend?" asked Dick pettishly.

Sir Arthur, for reply, put the paper into his hands. Dick read the account carefully, but did not seem to find it so satisfactory as Sir Arthur had expected.

"I knew she would set the place on fire," was his sole comment.

"Aye; she had a fit, they say; but 'mutato nomine de te'—D.T., you know," nodding and laughing appreciatively at his own pun.

Dick did not appreciate, understand, or laugh at it at all, but remained serious and silent—not far from sullen. Presently Sir Arthur approached the business he had at heart.

"I was thinking of a run to Ireland for some fishing."

"The country's in a deuce of a state at present," replied Dick discouragingly.

Well knowing what was coming, he hoped to ward off the request for the fulfilment of his promise. He needed for himself what credit he had with his friends across the Channel. Besides, he felt that this credit was so waterlogged as to be unequal to buoying up the dead weight he held Sir Arthur to be.

"They seem quiet enough about Ballyboreen."

Ballyboreen was the seat of Lord Drumcondra, the peer to whom Dick had promised him a letter of introduction.

"Drumcondra doesn't think so, I can tell you. I had a letter from him the other day, in which he said he had had two agents shot under him," as though they were chargers; "and the last fellow wrote to say he'd be hanged if he stayed longer, and so he will, I dare say."

It was now Dick's turn to laugh at his own joke, and Sir Arthur's to remain sullenly inappreciative. Dick's manner of backing out of his promise was more irritating than the breach of faith itself. Dropping this subject as hopeless, Sir Arthur passed abruptly and almost peremptorily to his next. It was time to let Dick feel the curb and know his master.

"Look here, Brabazon, I should like a settlement. I dropped a pot of money at the Liverpool Meeting last week, and I am so hard up at this moment——"

"That's what every rascally dun says," burst out Dick, out of temper to begin with, and no longer able to restrain his irritation. "I am sorry I ever bought or borrowed a rap from them," his wrath rising at the thought of the gross ingratitude of his creditors. "Most fellows would have become bankrupt, and let you get a penny in the pound out of the sale of their goods, while I sell myself to pay you in full."

"I don't know what you mean by rascally duns, Brabazon, but——"

"I don't mean you, if that's what you're driving at," interrupted Dick, in a tone which was not conciliatory at all.

"Yes, that's what I'm driving at, and what you're driving at too. But you may drive too fast and too far. I'm not to be spoken to like a dog because you owe me money, and more than money."

"I told you before," said Dick, mildly now, "I told you before that I didn't mean you; and if I spoke irritably, I am sorry, and apologise. But there's irritation enough in those letters, or in this paper, for the matter of that, to sour a saint,"

pointing to a heap of duns' missives and to the *Ryecote Herald*.

This was an unexpected view for Dick to take of Archie's adventure, over which Sir Arthur exulted as fatal to his last chance of Ida. It was plain that Dick viewed the adventure in a precisely opposite light, and much, therefore, of his irritation was thereby accounted for. Nevertheless, Sir Arthur, seeing Dick conciliatory, thought it politic to remain silent and sullen till he brought him to his knees. Dick, however, stooped no lower than to say at last:

"Look here, Denzil, you can't strip a naked nigger. The moment I get my money you shall get yours. I really don't see what more I can say or you can ask." With which draft upon Providence Sir Arthur was forced and fain to be content.

But the news Sir Arthur brought, and his hardly disguised threat, determined Dick to hurry on at all possible speed his marriage to Ida. Of course it could not take place anywhere at once, nor in this neighbourhood for many months; but why should they not all fit to London, where he and Ida might be married privately when an interval, not absolutely indecent, had elapsed after Mr. Tuck's death?

The expediency—the positive necessity—of this he would urge forthwith upon his aunt.

But his aunt needed no urging at all in the matter. For years she had set her heart on a visit to London, but could not prevail upon Mr. Tuck, with his morbid horror of expense, to entertain the idea. Now that she was free, she waited only for a proper interval of mourning seclusion to pass to indulge herself with this long-looked-for treat.

No sooner, therefore, did Dick broach his plan than she saw all the advantages he would have urged on its behalf, and more. For it would part not only Archie and Ida, but Dick and Anastasia also.

The more she considered, the more she mistrusted and disliked the exemplary Dick's dry legal dealings with this fascinating Portia, while she took Dick's view altogether of the impression Archie's adventure would leave upon Ida.

"I know exactly what she'll think about it. She'll think it all pure magnanimity on his part. At any rate, she'll see that he couldn't at once have cared so much for her as to save her at the risk of his life, and so little for her as to drive her to suicide. That girl's making him the scorn

of all England wasn't likely to revive his love."

"But there's something in what that fellow says," objected Dick, pointing to the paper, "that his love was revived by her attempt at suicide for his sake," making this suggestion to his aunt with the sole view of having it pressed by her upon Ida.

"There might seem to be something in it to those who know nothing of the woman; but Ida no more believes that she attempted to commit suicide for his sake than you do," looking keenly at Dick.

"Than I do! I assure you I think she's just the kind of woman to do anything for love."

"Well, you ought to know," said his aunt dryly. "But for my part, I think she's just the kind of woman to do anything for money. However, it isn't what you or I think about her, but what Ida thinks, that's of consequence, and she has no doubt of her being an impostor; and, as it was from him she got this opinion of her, she'll believe that he saved her in spite of his disgust and out of pure magnanimity. He'll make the most of it, you may depend."

"You mean that they are to go on meeting each other!" exclaimed Dick in a tone of the deepest disgust.

"She must bid him good-bye if he's going to quit England."

"Quit England! You don't really think he's a notion of quitting England, or Heatherley either? What's he been staying at Heatherley for while he's well enough to play amateur fireman like this? It would be more to the purpose to quit Heatherley than to talk big about quitting England. You know very well it is all talk to draw Ida."

"But I don't see what I can do, Dick. I can't make him quit Heatherley."

"But you can quit Kingsford, aunt."

And Dick then proceeded to lay his plan before his aunt, with the result we have mentioned — her eager and immediate adoption of it.

The next thing was to get Ida to come into it unsuspectingly. Fearing lest she might suppose it inspired by apprehension of the effect upon her in Archie's favour of this magnanimous rescue of Anastasia, Mrs. Tuck resolved to keep back the paper and its news, as though they had not yet reached herself.

"Well, my dear, what do you think of my new freak?" she asked at once, as the most innocent approach to the subject she could think of.

Ida was in her own room, where she had of late spent much of each day.

"What new freak?" she replied, with raised eyebrows.

"Hasn't Richard told you? He hasn't seen you since? Why, my dear, I've made my mind up to go to London."

"To London!"

"Not en route for Bedlam, dear, as your face seems to suspect."

"But why to London?"

"There's one reason, Ida," said Mrs. Tuck, holding the glass before Ida's face. "You've got so white and worn that I'm miserable about you. The truth is, you're moped to death here, and want to be well shaken out of yourself, and there's no place like London for that. The Finches are there now, and Colonel Sibthorpe. We shall be quite a Kingsford party."

"But I'd so much rather stay at home, Mrs. Tuck," pleaded Ida.

"That's just it, my dear. You've got so moped that you've lost heart for everything. A change will do you all the good in the world. Now, Ida dear, do let me have my own way in this," she hastened to add, to prevent the objections she saw in Ida's face.

"But, if we must go somewhere, I'd much prefer a quiet place, where we should be to ourselves altogether."

"Why, my dear Ida, you're just describing London," shifting her ground with forensic adroitness. "There's no more lonely or icy place on this side of the North Pole. You might die in the streets without your death troubling anyone but a policeman."

Ida was somewhat taken aback by this sudden reversal of the picture.

"I thought you meant to see something of Kingsford friends."

"Tut! Friends in Kingsford are acquaintances in London. There are no such things as friends there, the place is so big. My dear, friendship in London's like bread in a sieve; there is so little to begin with, and there are so many to share the little there is. No fear of your being bored by friends there; for, if you like, you can be as much alone in London as in a lighthouse."

Ida was silent — silenced through seeing that Mrs. Tuck's real reason for this trip to London could not be the devoted one she alleged; for how was she to be roused out of herself by going to live in a lighthouse? Mrs. Tuck, taking her silence for assent, proceeded to enlarge upon the virtue of London as a medicine, nauseous.

but wholesome, which it would do them all good to take, though none of them could pretend to like it particularly, and wound up with this dismal counsel of resignation:

"My dear, London is like death; every one must go through it some time or another."

She plainly thought now that this mode of speaking of the trip would be most soothing, and suit best with Ida's morbid melancholy.

An hour later Mrs. Tuck knocked at Ida's door again, this time with the paper and the news.

"Your cousin seems bent on making the fortune of the newspapers, my dear," with the suspicion of a sneer in her tone, handing Ida the paper.

"Archie!" gasped Ida, with a sudden sickening of the heart, which left her face as white as paper.

"Oh, this time he's a hero," with a more pronounced sneer in her tone. She was not going to encourage the extravagant views Ida was certain to take of the adventure.

The girl would be sure to think this heroic rescue of Anastasia mere, pure, sublime magnanimity on Archie's part.

But—but—shall we confess it? This was not Ida's first and sole impression. She was in wretched spirits; she was prepared by Mrs. Tuck's manner for bad news; and she was passionately in love. For all these reasons her first feeling as she read was jealousy!

Surely Archie must have cared still something for this woman. Her face, therefore, as she read, did not express the relief Mrs. Tuck expected, but was still clouded and unhappy—with concern for Archie, Mrs. Tuck imagined. Now, she had already resolved to suggest that Ida should pay her inevitable farewell visit to Heatherley at once, in part to disarm her of any suspicion that the proposal of a trip to London had to do with dread of Archie, and in part to expedite their departure. Accordingly she said at once sympathetically:

"Perhaps you had better call to-morrow, dear, to see if he's any the worse for the exposure and excitement, or the fire itself, for he seems to have been through it."

"It doesn't say——" she began, taking up again eagerly the paper to be sure there was no suggestion of Archie being injured. There was a "special's" picturesque description of Archie, white, gaunt, fever-shaken, moving as their master among the flames like one of the genii in the Hall of Eblis; but at the close it said that, beyond

being scorched a little, he was unhurt. "It says he was unhurt," coldly, in a tone about which there was no mistake.

Mrs. Tuck saw, and was amazed to see, that Ida was jealous; but was not more surprised than pleased. Hoping to add fuel to the fire, she said indiscreetly:

"I should have thought he had been cured of that infatuation," with an emphasis of supreme contempt upon "that."

Now nothing more disgusts us with any opinion of ours than the caricature of it from the lips of another. The secret of the monkey's excessive ugliness in our eyes is its revolting resemblance to ourselves. Ida, therefore, saw at once the meanness of her jealousy in the magnified reflection of it presented to her by Mrs. Tuck.

"He would have tried to save any woman, and was not likely to stand by to see her burned before his eyes, because she had injured him," she replied quickly and indignantly.

Then Mrs. Tuck perceived that she had blundered, and thought her blunder of more importance than it really was. In truth, it was rather the occasion than the cause of the reaction in Ida's mind in Archie's favour. In any case the girl would have soon come to her better self, and reasoned that, if Archie was generous enough to attempt to save anyone in such circumstances—as he certainly was—he could not be so ungenerous as to hang back from the attempt because the woman on the brink of being burned alive had done him a mortal injury. This, we say, was Ida's second and settled view of the affair. Now and again, indeed, a spasm of jealousy would strike like a neuralgic pang through her mind, but this was owing to her mind not being now in a healthy state. She was so utterly unhappy in the false position into which she had drifted, that she naturally looked at the dark side of things. Such spasms of jealousy, however, were short and intermittent, and for the most part she held fast by her faith in Archie in these first hours after the news of his rescue of Anastasia had reached her.

"I think I shall go over to-morrow as you suggest, Mrs. Tuck," she said presently, as Mrs. Tuck made no answer of any kind to her vindication of Archie.

She thought silence would express most effectively and least offensively her dissent from Ida's rather defiant defence of him.

"I think you had better, dear, as you promised to see him again, and we go to town on Monday."

A CRUISE IN THE NORFOLK BROADS*.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

THAT afternoon we came swinging into Oulton Broad, and made fast against the bank. Originally this broad must have been a tidal salt-water lagoon. Now it is a large, reed-fringed, fresh-water lake. From Lowestoft, which is about a mile and a half off, a creek runs up from the sea to a lock which gives entrance from it to the broad. You can stand on the bridge and drop a stone with one hand into salt water, and with the other into fresh.

Oulton Broad is a charming place to lie in. It is the home of a variety of sailing-craft—the end of the broad is full of them. Close by us was lying a lordly craft of about thirty tons, which came down with us, with a whole family on board. Out beyond was a small open boat with a ridiculous mast, and the most absurd bowsprit I ever saw in a boat.

The fifty or so other craft ranged between these two extremes. Besides these were several old, dismantled fishing-smacks, some of them in the last stage of decay. They are brought there when they are out of commission, in order that the fresh-water of the broad may kill the salt-water life, animal and vegetable, that has accumulated on their bottoms. It is an inexpensive way of cleaning them. Some of the poor old things seem to have taken a long time to get cleaned, for they were dropping to pieces, and looked gaunt and grim in the bright lake, so full of abundant life, a sort of skeleton at the feast to those who are fond of boats, and consequently look upon them as half animate creatures.

These old, sturdy, worn-out fishing-boats tower up among the butterfly craft around them like beings from another world, as indeed they are, for they came from the grim, hard world of reality, from the work in which lives are risked to gain a precarious existence. They smile benignly upon their flimsy neighbours, but they have no converse with them. They speak another language. We could hear them talking as we floated about among them in the evening in the dingey. The pleasure-boats were prattling about the glory of having won matches under canvas that would have capsized them had the wind been stronger than the breath from a lady's fan, and

swaggering about the gales of wind they had weathered in the sheltered pond in which they lay, while the sturdy old craft alongside them were talking about "hard weather" in the North Sea, when the Sancy Polly had her mast taken out of her and three men washed overboard, and the Star of Lowestoft lost her nets and nearly foundered: and of that other day when the whole fleet was blown on to the French coast, and nearly went ashore on the sands off Dunkerque. It was curious to paddle away from them, and in a few minutes find yourself in a silent forest of reeds. Not a breath stirring; a moorhen here and there swimming in and out, and shaking the reeds with a momentary quiver; an occasional lazy plunge of a fish, that left slowly expanding rings on the water. A silvery mist everywhere rising from the water to the line of the horizon, where the light of the rising moon was gradually killing the after-glow of the sun.

Through the mist you see a small black object looming, a small lump in the sea of mist and water—our floating home; and as we go on board, our cabin, with the lamp alight and the curtains drawn, looks very comfortable and inviting, an oasis of brightness and warmth in the surrounding dampness. There is plenty to do in that cabin, too, for we are getting hungry, and we have to cook our dinner. The night before we entrusted it to the tender mercies of Tom and a paraffin-stove. He meant well, but his health had to be considered, and we decided that at any sacrifice we would relieve him of all his culinary labours except cooking the vegetables. The viands were therefore brought into the cabin, and we were setting to work to cook them, when a small difficulty confronted us. We had no kitchen-fire! The only stove in the ship was the before-mentioned paraffin abomination which was being used for the vegetables, and was condemned as unfit for any other purpose. It was annoying to make the discovery just as we were getting really hungry and wanted dinner; but the very extremity of our distress stimulated imagination that might otherwise have been torpid. We had spirits of wine with us for burning in an Etna, but no stove or even a lamp in which to burn it. Here, however, a flash of genius illumined us. Spirit will burn without a wick—the only thing necessary was to find some small vessel in which to burn it. The lid of a small tin box, about two inches in diameter, supplied this. This small fire-place we put inside a

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 25, p. 196, "The Broads and Rivers of East Anglia"; and Vol. 25, n. 427, "Deceit."

large tin biscuit-box, which not only concentrated the heat, but made a convenient frame on which to rest the cooking utensils, and so in a few minutes we had extemporised as good a fire as the heart of cook could desire.

We lay at our moorings all the next day. The broad was comfortable enough to lie in; it was possible to get our damaged rail repaired there, and Lowestoft was close by.

Lowestoft is not the place I would choose to spend a month in. I do not remember ever to have seen a place from which every element of excitement is so carefully excluded. But you don't want excitement when you land from a sailing cruise, and we found a walk into the town, a stroll on the pier, and the purchase of necessary stores, quite as much change as we wanted from the placid enjoyment of our aquatic life.

There are always a hundred and one things to do in a boat, and twice a hundred and one things to see and hear, particularly in inland waters. As I sat in the cabin writing letters or what not, after all the others had turned in, I might have been in the middle of the Sahara, so perfect was the silence, and so perfectly motionless the boat. Then, after a while, I could hear the suck, suck, of an eel feeding against the bank; then a splash, as a fish rose; then the rustle of a rat among the osiers. It has a weird feeling sitting with your accustomed writing-materials around you in the midst of rich evidences of another world than your own; to have come, with your civilised appliances, suddenly into such perfect wildness. I was fascinated by the strange sounds that but accentuated the stranger silence—a silence that seemed like a huge void, when presently it was filled with sound. A mallard on sentry raised a warning cry. First one bird, then another, took it up, till before many seconds a perfect chorus of shrieks, and cries, and cackles, and gobbles, from ducks, geese, widgeon, plover, water-hens, resounded over the water. The previous silence seemed to have attenuated the atmosphere, and exaggerated each cry, till, the alarm over, calm settled down again.

Next morning I was overboard early, and when after completing my subsequent toilet operations I came on deck again, we were slowly slipping out of the broad with just enough movement to give us steerage way. The motion was so quiet, that, until

I came out of the cabin, I did not know we had left our moorings.

To enjoy the life thoroughly, you must be endowed with the faculty of loafing—must be able to take an actual pleasure in doing nothing. If you are so endowed, it is a delicious sensation to sit on a deck-stool, smoking your morning pipe, and watching the splendid vegetation of the bank as it drifts slowly past you. Here you see a moorhen swimming about, flipping her head and tail; there a flight of plover; beyond, a heron rises slowly and heavily, and a constantly-changing panorama of land and water, grazing cattle, and sailing barges, is rolled out before you.

As the morning advanced the wind freshened, and we bowled steadily along, at one time through country that looked as desolate as if the foot of man had never trod it; at another, through a canal, side by side with a train that ran so close by the water we were half-afraid our main-boom would break the windows, while at the same distance on the other side Mr. Taffy was enjoying a constitutional. Presently I went a little way up the rigging, and across the flat country could see the traffic of the main river coming up with the tide from Yarmouth—a whole fleet of picturesque wherries, a Thames barge, and a sea-going billyboy, with mizen, mainsail, gaff-topsail, staysail, and three jibs set—a strange apparition to be moving through the peaceful meadows.

At Reedham our canal met the river, and from there up to Norwich the river is so like the Thames that all the way along we were saying at intervals, "Staines," "One-tree Reach," "Laleham," "Cookham," till finally we anchored for the night just below Whitlingham, in a small edition of Cliveden Reach. Until the last few miles the wind served us well, and gave us a most exhilarating sail, through charming country, and in company with a crowd of other vessels.

When I came back, people asked me how I managed to amuse myself when I said I neither fished nor shot all the time I was in Norfolk. They could not understand the interest of sailing about a small fresh-water stream for ten days at a stretch. But we were never at a loss for amusement; our only difficulty was that we had not time to see all there was to be seen—to explore all the tempting places we passed. There was something to be looked at all day long. Our old friend, the billyboy, lasted us for some time. Fancy sailing

from Staines to Old Windsor with a craft of that kind; her topsail towering above the trees; the skipper, with a pilot-cloth waistcoat, shirt-sleeves, and fur-cap, sitting on the water-cask, smoking a pipe; his wife, scrupulously neat in her dress, surveying the country with lofty condescension; the dog flying backwards and forwards from stem to stern, calling Taffy all the salt-water names he could lay his tongue to, which Taffy, being only accustomed to fresh-water Billingsgate, did not understand, and treated with disdain.

Then there were the wherries, most graceful of freight-carrying craft. Out of water their lines are exquisite. Your eye is never tired of following their beautiful curves. How good their lines are you see when they come swirling along under a stiff breeze, making scarcely a ripple as they go through the water! They carry a very stout mast, unsupported by any rope but the forestay. The mast is fitted in a tabernacle, so as to lower, and carries at the heel a mass of iron, varying in weight according to the size of the spar. The only sail is a huge gaff-sail, generally tanned a rich brown, black, or red. When they have to go under a bridge, which frequently happens, they keep everything standing till they are within fifty yards or so of it; then one of the two men goes forward, lets go the halliards, and the sail comes on deck with a run. He then lets go the forestay, the steersman hauls on one of the ropes, and the mast gracefully follows the sail. As soon as they are through the bridge, the steersman gives the mast a shove, and so beautifully is it balanced by the weight at the heel that that small impetus is almost enough to bring it into an upright position; a pull at the forestay does the remainder, and, before the boat has quite lost her way, the sail is hoisted and sheeted home, and the boat is on her voyage again. These wherries are better suited to their peculiar work and water than any boats I know. Their freight-carrying power is very great for their draught of water; their rig is perfect of its kind, and they will sail where an ordinary boat will scarcely look.

Then, besides these, we had the fleet of pleasure craft—one or two of them very nice boats; most of them preposterous things, with outrageous counters, ridiculous masts, and impossible bowsprits; and each one trying, by carrying another foot or two of canvas, to go ahead of her neighbour in a breeze like a lady's sigh.

And then there was the fun of sailing. Until I went on these waters I fondly thought I could sail a boat. I had sailed boats of a good many kinds, and imagined I knew something about it. The Wild Duck went about like a top; you could scarcely miss stays if you tried; but I often found that, after tacking, I had got her almost into the opposite bank before she had gathered way again. Then, when I turned over the tiller to one of the lads, and saw him ease off a sheet here, take a pull there, and humour her like a spoiled woman, I humbly admitted that I had a vast deal to learn. It takes all the skill you can muster, and all your attention, and patience, and temper, to make your boat do her best when you are beating through those narrow streams.

Then, three times a day, there were the sacred rites of the kitchen to be performed. So I did not find myself at a loss for amusement there, though I touched neither rod nor gun.

Our anchorage in the peaceful water, under the trees below the pretty, bright little village of Whitlingham, was the scene of a mutiny. Our skipper's sulky temper grew till it broke out into outrageous mutiny and open desertion. Luckily, he reserved this final act of insubordination till we were at Whitlingham, where we were within half a mile of a telegraph-station, and less than half an hour by rail from the owner of the boat. It was an unfortunate combination for the skipper. He kept us hanging about there for a whole day, it is true, but, within two hours of his final desertion, that most courteous gentleman, the owner of the boat, was on board, giving me full power to dismiss the skipper on his return, and so we were rid of the only element of discomfort in our small community. Thinking the second hand might resent the dismissal of his brother, I gave him the option of going too; but he philosophically remarked that "one must live," intimating that he had no intention of throwing away his bread-and-cheese from any sentimental reason; and from that time onwards he did his best to serve us faithfully and make our trip pleasant.

We left Whitlingham in heavy, misty weather that soon turned to drizzle; and gave us occasionally pretty effects of subdued light, but very poor sailing; in fact, we did little more than drift down to Reedham, where we anchored for the night for three reasons: firstly, because we

wanted to take in provisions; secondly, because we wanted to engage a hand to help us through Breydon on the morrow—the owner of the boat having stipulated that we should do so, since he knew nothing whatever of either my capacity or that of the remaining member of my crew for sailing a boat; and thirdly, because we couldn't get any farther. As soon, therefore, as we had made fast to the bank, I went ashore with my sailing-master-mate-crew-steward-cook, Joe, who bore a huge stone jar for beer, and on landing I asked, firstly, for the butcher's shop, and secondly for the public-house. The second I found easily enough, and very bad beer I got there. As for the butcher's shop, I was told that there wasn't one, but that the butcher would be round on Thursday, and I could get some meat from him if I could wait till then; but I couldn't, as this was Tuesday, and went on board again and dined on tinned beef. In our other search, that of an additional hand for the morrow, we were more successful; engaging a young wherryman—i.e. bargee—of about nineteen, a young giant with a beaming face, and the strength of a Hercules. Dick, the young giant, soon ingratiated himself with me by admiring my extemporised cooking apparatus. "That do cook well, that do," he remarked when he saw it in operation, and then enquired of Joe where he could get one like it for his barge.

From Reedham to Yarmouth we sailed neck and neck with a large cutter, sometimes gaining a few hundred yards, sometimes losing it, according as the wind favoured us or our skill faltered; beyond Yarmouth we were neck and neck with a wherry for a long time before we could shake her off; it is often difficult in very narrow water to get clear of a craft that carries a huge sail like a wherry. But she was a pretty sight in herself, and her crew consisted of two men—one the ugliest, cheeriest, most jovial creature, and the other the handsomest I ever saw. When we finally passed them, the ugly one was at the tiller chaffing anybody he saw within hailing distance on the bank, laughing, singing, till we were all on the broad grin from sheer sympathy; and the other was sitting on the winch of the mast, looking as handsome and graceful as a Greek statue. When we left them we passed into a silent land—the wind dropped, and the last few miles we had to tow the boat. The country was perfectly

flat—genuine fen country; a small railway-bridge that was our destination loomed up like another Arc de Triomphe in the heavy white mist, that gradually rose till it covered the country, and made the land look like water, and the water like land. People there were none, nor any sound but that of birds, and fish, and distant cattle.

But this country, desolate as it was, was cheerful and cultivated compared with that we went into next day. As soon as we had got over the labour of preparing and eating breakfast we got into the dingey, and rowed to Horsey Mere. You turn out of the stream in which we were anchored into a tortuous channel, fringed with strange and often rare water-plants, that leads into the mere. Arrived there, you feel that you have reached the end of the world. The feathering reeds that abound everywhere else, give place to dense masses of rushes. From these every now and then wild duck rise, frequently within easy shot; and these give the only sign of life that you can notice around you. The water is crystal clear, and the bottom is a thick bed of beautiful green moss. It looked so beautiful, that we fished some up to take away with us, but the smell when it reached the surface was so horrible that we soon returned it into store.

Floating over this green bed you wander in and out among the rushes. In front of you is Hickling Broad, another large expanse of shallow water, quite white with swans at one end. On the left are woods, with the sound of birds in them, and on the right you see the masts of ships in the North Sea. You land, and find yourself on a belt of sand dunes that alone divides you from the sea. Sometimes, paddling about in the calm fresh-water lake, you can hear the sound of the surf on the shore. It is a curious, weird place. Like a wild creature it has hidden itself in this out-of-the-way corner, and protected itself by its tortuous entrance. Soon, alas! the shout of the tourist will desecrate it, and its nameless charm will be among the things that were.

That evening we got back to Wroxham, and went back to our shore quarters. We had been away ten days, and it seemed like three weeks; and as change of scene and life is the principal object of a holiday excursion, we thought that the feeling was satisfactory evidence that our cruise had been successful.

TIDINGS FROM TILBURY.

THUS much may be said for the East End of London, that if here be the greatest crush and crowd of existence, the poorest dwellings, the most teeming population, yet the real country is closer at hand, and the contrast between the tumult of the town and the restful quiet of the country more sudden and complete than in the west. Just now we were on the housetops of Stepney, with glimpses of the masts of shipping and their fluttering flags, and peeps into squalid courts and damp and darksome alleys. But here is a country station with a little common close by, where cows are feeding, but invaded by a row of suburban cottage villas, as the builders have it, only half finished, and seemingly at a standstill, as if the moving tide of London had just reached there, and receded for a while, leaving them high and dry. Other drift and foam of the great city are the dusty-footed pilgrims, slouching along the road or resting on the grassy patches by the wayside, the flotsam and jetsam of London streets, whom the first warm days of summer bring into the country. But then there is the respectable little country settlement, with its own shady lane and umbrageous grove, with its diminutive mansions of red-brick, and with its pleasant, sleepy homesteads, where all is calm and sweet repose, but for the vigorous chirping of birds from the leafy wilderness and the slow, complacent cluck of the hen with her brood under the coop on the grass-plot. Here to lean over a gate, and listen to the glad chirping and hum of birds and insects, is to realise how summer is coming in, with its full tide of life and joy that faintly stirs the heart even of the weariest and most dusty wayfarer.

And yet we are only a few miles from the docks; and, from the lofty bridge that carries the highway over the line of railway, the murky cloud of London can be seen on the horizon. And from this cloud, with quick, passionate beat, issues the roaring, steaming train that carries us away from this little country nook, before unknown, which was so pleasant a relief from the hot stones of Fenchurch Street, where otherwise we must have done a two hours' penance for misreading the time-table. For Tilbury is our aim, a place not to be reached without care and contrivance, or upon the assumption that all the trains on the Tilbury and Southend line reach the former destination: seeing that most of

them end their career prematurely at Barking. And Barking has a pleasant, countrified, and yet amphibious appearance, with its creek now brimming full, and flowing inwards with the incoming tide, its barges and a fishing-boat or two, with their tanned sails. Nor is there any particular savour of sewage about the old place, any more than of the ancient nuns of Barking as they lie in their stone coffins under the green sod.

But the train rumbles on with only time for a glance at all this, and then we run through pleasant green pastures, dotted here and there with some little settlement of the East Saxons—villages with a nice old-world look about them, such as Rainham, with the peaked spire on the low, square, sturdy church-tower, the cluster of red roofs among the clump of trees, the windows that seem to blink at you, the weather-boarded cottages.

Hitherto there has been a half-consciousness of the neighbourhood of a great river, in the broad stretch of marshes, and the gleam now and then of a white sail, as if astray among the fields; in the creeks with their steep, water-worn banks, over which the train thunders heavily; in the line of low hills which rise with a well-defined shore indented by green fields instead of turbid waters; in the sky which has nowhere the quiet stay-at-home aspect of inland skies, but gleams with strange reflections, and where the sun glows out from behind broken clouds with a milder and more watery radiance. But for all these indications it comes as a surprise at last when a broad bight of the shining river opens out upon us; a tranquil bay, where massive line-of-battle ships lie moored, with high wall-sides, and lines of white ports—the wooden walls of Old England, now retired from business and doing duty as training-ships. This is Purfleet, pleasantest of all these riverside villages, with its old-fashioned inn, in the good sense of the word; a place that looks inviting enough from the river and seems equally pleasant from shore.

And then we are among the quaint cliffs of Grays, where the sandstone that crowns the chalk rises in strange, fantastic shapes, and at one point takes the semblance of the ruins of some feudal castle. Between, you get glimpses of the river, with more line-of-battle ships, of the "Nelson and the Nile" old-fashioned type, with ships passing to and fro, and the pleasant hills of Kent shining on the other side of the sparkling

waters. A curious nook is this, and with a curious name, Grays Thurrock, to give its title in full. And Grays seems understandable enough, for grey it is—all grey chalk of the compact lower beds, chalk that makes good lime; and there are the lime-kilns at work, with trucks running to and from the chalk-pits, and boats lying by the wharves loading up with lime, and all as grey as you please with the dust of lime and chalk. And then somebody suggests that, after all, grey is only craye, which would be good Norman-French for chalk, and Chalk Thurrock is surely quite understandable and appropriate. But upon that some genealogically-minded man interposes and remarks dogmatically "that this Thurrock is neither grey from its colour nor craye from its material substance, but takes its name from its ancient lords, the De Grays." But in spite of his deeds and charters, our genealogist carries conviction to no man. For the grey chalk was there long before the lords of the soil, and if there were any borrowing, or giving of names, it is more likely that the men took theirs from the rock, than vice versa.

And there are other curious features about this curiously-named place, if there were time for exploration. Hereabouts the chalk is curiously honeycombed with excavations which have puzzled the wits of people lang syne, and still continue to puzzle them. These are narrow, round shafts sunk into the earth like wells, but expanding at the bottom into chambers of more or less commodiousness. The caverns were once known as Dane-holes, and the story went that they were used by the Danes in their plundering excursions, as hiding-places for their booty. Others have thought that the caverns were British granaries, and cite ancient authors to show that it was the practice of some British tribes to store their corn underground; while there are sceptics who deny altogether the remote antiquity of these excavations, and assign them as quarries for flints—once largely in demand for firelocks of all kinds, as well as for glass-works and potteries.

Often enough we have marked this pleasant nook of Grays from the water, and envied those who live on the brow that overlooks the river, where all the argosies of Ind. and Cathay sail by at your feet, and come and go with the tide. But we have never before passed through it by land; and now we have but a flying glimpse of it, with cliffs, and river, and training-ships, and floating islands, or

what appear such, with white houses built upon them, and boats passing between; while the thin chalk headlands, and thinner slices of sandstone, carved or worn into fantastic shapes, irresistibly suggest the pasteboard rocks of the theatre, and give the effect of a carefully-arranged scene in a play.

And then the scene vanishes, and we pass once more among the green, marshy pastures, and, behold, between ourselves and the river, rise the tall palisades of a vast enclosure—a sort of gigantic park-fence, through which, as through a veil, are mistily seen the engines, trucks, and mounds, the mud-banks, and wheelbarrows, the swarms of navvies at work, and the result of their labours in a vague, indefinite trench of unlimited extent; while piles of freestone and huge cranes suggest the wharves and warehouses that are presently to replace the mud-banks. There is nothing impressive in the beginnings of docks—a mere hole in the ground, too shallow to appeal to the imagination; but the interminable line of palisades carries conviction as to the greatness of the undertaking. The new docks will contain some seventy-six acres of water space, while the whole area to be covered by the docks, and by their accessories in the shape of buildings and wharves, amounts to three hundred and twenty acres.

But what a change for the quiet, lonely marshes of West Tilbury, where a stranger scarcely ever penetrated—where soon a town is destined to rise alongside of the wharves and store-houses of the new docks! London will stretch out a long arm to embrace this new region, the East End will cease to be an end, and will be continued in a long highway of nations, crowded by miscellaneous groups of strange-looking foreigners. Hansom-cabs will roll over these marshes where now cattle are browsing, and four-wheelers encumbered with luggage will crawl doggedly along to their destination. Emigrants will flock here in troops, and salt tears will be shed by those who go away, and those who are left behind. India and Africa will be nearer Tilbury, and of more importance to it than Margate is at this present moment. China will cram its stores with chests of tea, and its wharves will be fragrant with the products of the isles of spices. Thieves will congregate here, and policemen to catch them. That tuft of rushes may be the future site of a police-court, and churches, and Ebenezers, and Bethels will

replace the hedgerows and wet ditches. All the wealth and squalor, the riot and misery, that surround the seafaring world, will find a home here, and St. Chad, who had the credit of Christianising this remote nook, if he can be allowed to visit once more the scene of his missionary labours, will probably exclaim in despair: "Alas, it is all to begin again!"

At present, however, this is represented simply by mud-banks, and the district is more remote, chaotic, and inaccessible than ever, awaiting the time when the waters shall begin to flow in dock and tidal basin, and the place shall suffer its sea change.

After the palisading of the new docks is passed, Tilbury station is soon reached, where there is a kind of back-door to Tilbury Fort, opening upon a raised path-way that leads close to the river's brink. A pleasant path it proves, with the broad, green pastures on one hand, larks warbling in the air and rising till they are lost to sight in the dazzling sky, while the river is washing the pebbles at our feet—the river in full tide, with all its bravery of ships and sails. Nor is there wanting the animation of human interest. The path itself is pretty thickly dotted with people moving towards the fort, with murmur of voices and the rustle of summer dresses.

The walk finishes where a hulk lies moored, the coastguard-station, in fact, neat and pleasant-looking, with flowers peeping out of its grim portholes, and here a primitive country stile gives access to a strip of strand where stands a little inn, not inaptly named the World's End, for here you really seem to have come to the end of the known world. Anything beyond is a matter of doubt, and subject to the pleasure of those big guns that show their black noses over the green banks of the forts. And so through a narrow approach the glacis is reached, with a pleasant green slope, where a flock of white geese threaten to alarm the garrison, while the broad, placid moat gives reflections of the fleecy clouds overhead.

But by'r Lady! what wonderful animal is this that caracoles across the green and bends its neck to drink in the placid waters? A hobby-horse surely, and the sight recalling the festive mummeries of former days, gives at once quite an Elizabethan feeling to the scene. The garrison is evidently en fête, the great gates at the fort are invitingly open, flags wave, music sounds, and there is a general hum of enjoyment in the air.

Within the gateway lies a spacious enclosure, with on either hand a row of neat, low, seventeenth-century houses, the quarters of officers, commissioned and otherwise, with plenty of greensward between, and a row of storehouses. The greensward is all alive with enjoyment. Aunt Sallys and knock-me-downs, a mimic tournament of hobby-horse knights; a band discoursing at intervals, lawn-tennis on the officers' side, and tents and umbrella-shades where refreshments are served. The plain old War Department stores have been turned out and fitted up as a bazaar, with all kinds of pretty things for sale, and jugs and water-pots, Moresque and Spanish. For, as seems truly appropriate at Tilbury, with its historic memories taken into consideration, our military fête has on one side a Spanish character. The little fort in the marsh greets its big brother on the rock, the mouse does its devoir to the lion. For who, remembering that grand, crouching rock of Gibraltar set in the deep blue of the Mediterranean, with its outlook over sea and land, the tawny African coast, and the lovely blue mountains of Spain, can help marking the contrast between its grand fortifications and magnificent site, and the modest bastions and unassuming pop-guns of little Tilbury.

But for all its pleasant looks—to those who view it after the grey skies and terrible Atlantic roll of the Bay of Biscay as a soldier's station—the general vote would be against Gibraltar, and in favour of Tilbury. There is a terrible sameness in life upon the Rock, especially for the private soldier. The heat enervates, and the lack of space forbids any great devotion to athletics, while after drill and fatigue duty, all the suggestions of soul and sense point to a drink. And there are plenty of low drinking-shops to supply the need, with the cheap, harmful drinks of the period, native and imported, while allurements of the vicious kind are more strong and perilous than even in an English garrison town. And thus a soldiers' institute, where Tom Atkins can spend his leisure hours in a pleasant, social, respectable way, now some years established, is a work of real utility, which Tilbury is trying to help on in this pleasant way. Help for the building fund is what is most needed, and, for those who sympathise with the soldier's needs and privations, there could be no better object for generosity.

But what excites the greatest interest in the mind of the casual visitor is the

announcement of a loan exhibition in Queen Elizabeth's room. It really is Queen Elizabeth's; on that point we are firmly assured by two gallant artillerymen, who point out the way. The stout sergeant-major in the gateway is equally positive on the subject. The room is Queen Elizabeth's; she slept in that very room when she came here to review the troops. And so we enter, and by a narrow staircase draped with flags, the building outwardly being of red-brick, with a peaked roof masked towards the river by the florid stonework of the gateway. In passing by on the river you may make out behind the gateway, which means Tilbury Fort to the multitude, a red-tiled roof, and in that roof is Queen Elizabeth's room. Really, in the roof, for we pass through bare, deserted chambers on the first-floor, and climb another narrow staircase before we reach the veritable room, with its coved roof, in all its bareness and simplicity; and yet the room has an antique feeling about it which its bareness and simplicity only intensify. In this cock-loft, no doubt, the Virgin Queen slept contentedly enough; and the morning sun as it shone in at the homely attic window glanced upon the white tents of her soldiers, as they lay encamped around the little village of West Tilbury. So may she have gazed out of this little window, where the sea breeze is softly jarring the casement, upon the reaches of the winding river, dotted with sails, and the rich, green marshes.

As to its present aspect, the room is lined with tables, on which are spread a nice little collection of curios from all parts of the world, wherever the familiar blue jacket and red stripes of the artilleryman are known—and where are they not?—with some specimens of armour and arquebusses from the Tower, such as may have done duty with the army about Tilbury. The equipments furnished from the Tower, by the way, were generally a good deal behind the age. The Earl of Leicester, who was in command at Tilbury, writes to Elizabeth that his men are ashamed to be seen in the morions supplied, feeling that they make them look ridiculous. Conspicuous on the walls is very appropriately placed the speech of Queen Elizabeth to her troops. The Queen's speech is preserved in a letter of Dr. Sharp to the Duke of Buckingham, in the following reign, at the time the Spanish marriage with Prince Charles was talked of. The doctor remembers, in '88,

waiting upon the Earl of Leicester at Tilbury Camp. "The Queen, next morning, rode through all the squadrons of her armie, as armed Pallas, attended by noble footmen, Leicester, Essex, and Norris, then Lords Marshal, and divers other great lords, when she made an excellent oration to her armies, which, the next day after her departure, I was commanded to redeliver to all the armies together."

There is a right noble ring about this speech, of which some sentences have grown almost into household words, such as these: "Being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battaile, to live or die amongst you all, to lay down for my God, and my kingdom, and my people, my honour and my blood even in the dust. I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a King of England, too, and think foul scorn that Parma, or Spain, or any prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm, to which, rather than any dishonour should grow by me, I myself will take up arms. I myself will be your general, judge, and record of everie one of your virtues in the field."

These were stirring words, and uttered in a moment of intense interest and suspense. It was the 8th of August, and the Armada was at large in the Channel; the ports of the Low Countries were crowded with ships and transports, ready to transport Parma's veteran army, and it was no secret that London and the Thames were the object of attack, the City having specially incurred the wrath of the Spaniard. By the 20th of August it was known that all danger was over—the Armada dispersed and flying homewards by the inhospitable coasts of Scotland.

To the Queen this visit to Tilbury would be memorable for other reasons. It was here she met for the last time the man who had been the object of her one great passion—the "goodliest personage male in England"—the handsome Earl of Leicester. He had written, urging her to come, as appears in the Domestic State Papers published by the Record Office. On the 5th of August the earl writes to the Queen that he had received in secret the news that pleaseth him most next the well-doing of her sacred person, that she intended to behold the poor company now in the field ready to die for her. "Good, sweet Queen, alter not your purpose, if God give you good health." The lodging

prepared for her is a proper, sweet, cleanly house, the camp within a little mile of it, and her person as sure as at St. James's.

Now the proper, sweet, cleanly house can hardly be other than this little block-house on the river, which fully answers the description, and is about the right distance from the camp. The florid stone gateway, the essence of Tilbury in its picturesque aspect, is a later addition of Charles the Second, or perhaps William and Mary. And to us it will henceforth be an article of fervent faith, that this is the very room that Elizabeth occupied; these the very windows that she looked from, on one side towards the sea, where her ships were even now at work with the Spaniards, on the other, towards the shore, where "her poor company now in the field" were sleeping in their tents, with her own Robert Dudley in the midst of them. Bitter-sweet to her must have been the memory of those early love-passages with the man whom she had favoured all these years with a never-failing affection, of whom she had said just now, with a well-understood fervour, "Never prince commanded more noble or worthie subject." Both were now growing old, and had come to the pass of talking over their ailments, and discussing matters of health and regimen. For a letter is preserved, from the Earl of Leicester to the Queen, written at the end of the eventful month of August, when all danger was over, and the Earl was making his way homeward to Kenilworth. The Earl has sent to enquire after her health, the chiefest thing in the world he prays for. As to his own poor case, he continues still her medicine, and has been better with that than any other. Dated from her old lodging at Rycott. A touching memory for the Queen, this last, for there she had lived in confinement a while in her youth, when under the cloud of her sister's displeasure, but with youth and love making her prison-walls radiant. And now! Poor Queen, and poor Robert Dudley! On the 4th of September following the Earl of Leicester died, and this letter of his is endorsed, in Elizabeth's own hand, "His last letter."

There is—nothing to jar—with these memories in the pleasant stir of merry-making about the fort; indeed, there is something cheerfully Elizabethan in the general display. And the stout old Queen, could she revisit these glimpses of the moon, would be pleasingly excited to hear that here, in her old block-house of Tilbury, where once she rallied her faithful subjects

against the Spaniard's power, people are now making good cheer for the Queen of England's soldiers, who hold the rock-cut citadel on the very land of Spain. And then, with a parting glance at the florid old gateway, with the peaked roof of Elizabeth's chamber all of a glow in the evening light, we take a long farewell of old Tilbury, and are presently among the roofs and chimney-pots of the great city.

WOODRUFFE.

Home's sacred nook, love's hallowed ground,
Where sweetest sight and softest sound

Meet watching eye and ear;
Where footsteps fall with lightest tread,
As in the chamber of the dead,
Yet fullest life is here.

She, lying on her couch of pain,
Turns lifelong loss to daily gain,
Her heart the alchymist;
From mystic heights by suffering won,
Her saintly eyes look down upon
Earth joys that she has missed.

God touched her in her cradle days,
And set her from the world's rude ways
For evermore apart;

The tiny sprays the children pull
Of woodruffe, white and beautiful,
Are likest her sweet heart.

And well she loves the simple flower,
Though to its neighbouring woodland bower,

In depth of summer grass,
O'erhung by summer's full-leaved trees,
O'erblown by summer's softest breeze,
Her feet may never pass.

And those who love her, love to find
A symbol of her stainless mind

In this white woodland flower;
So frail and small, so fair and pure,
Yet full of courage to endure
The dark and stormy hour.

Far from the highway's dust and glare
The woodruffe scents the forest air,
And lights the tender gloom;
Far from life's whirl of gain and loss,
Beneath the shadow of her cross,
She glads this quiet room.

And to her come the gay of heart,
That she may take with them her part
Of sweet love's corn and wine;
And to her come sad souls oppress,
For God hath filled her gentle breast
With sympathy divine.

Set far apart from common joys,
Yet smiling at earth's idle toys,
She waits her dread release;
The woodruffe with the summer fades,
And through life's gathering twilight shades
Will come Death's whisper, "Peace!"

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

OUR NEW RECTOR. PART II.

As the day drew near on which our new rector should stand for the first time before his congregation, the murmurs of apprehension grew louder and louder—loud enough, indeed, to drown the few and feeble protests against premature judgment

which had arisen from the minority of waverers in our midst.

Mr. Shawcross, the curate-in-charge, preached his farewell sermon, and received the conventional teapot and valedictory address. There was a slight controversy, a sort of tempest round a teapot, before the presentation could be harmoniously arranged; for one section of the congregation held to the belief that to give a curate-in-charge anything less than silver would be a breach of the etiquette ruling such matters; but the opposing faction, headed by Miss Dalgairns, carried the day; that lady maintaining that, etiquette or no etiquette, an electro-plated teapot and a purse of sovereigns was the right thing in the present instance, seeing that Mrs. Shawcross and half-a-dozen children all under ten had to be considered as well as the curate himself. The address accompanying was couched in terms far more complimentary than the exceedingly mediocre gifts of Mr. Shawcross seemed to warrant; but this address was likewise a sort of protest. Mr. Shawcross may not have been much to speak of as a spiritual guide; but he was, at least, far better than the new rector promised to be, and to the signers of the address all his failings were forgotten in the anticipation of future trouble.

For the succeeding week there was comparative calm, the truce before the battle. The new rector arrived on the Tuesday, and from that day a sharp watch was kept both on the rectory and on the sacred edifice to see that no illegal or obnoxious instrument of devotion should be transported from the one to the other; but the watch was quite superfluous. When, on the following Sunday morning, the unusually large congregation returned home to early dinner, no one was able to report any further change in the ornaments and ritual of the church than that the rector had preached in a surplice and not in a black gown; but as Mr. Northborough had always considered this matter quite non-essential, the surplice had been seen in the Shillingbury pulpit before this.

For three months or so things went on with very little alteration, except that Mayfield set to work to organise a choir, and I really believe that Miss Dalgairns and her allies felt a twinge of regret that they were still able to say their prayers without having their consciences outraged, and that no illegal proceeding could be laid to the new rector's charge.

The fact of the matter was, that Ambrose Mayfield having found out that he could fill the church by means of a good musical service and common-sense sermons, had determined to forego many of the outward forms, the practice of which had given him a reputation so horrifying to his new parishioners. He had felt the pulse of his parish pretty plainly before he had been a fortnight in residence, and had at once made up his mind what his line should be. He had no difficulty in hitting upon one, the following of which need neither empty his church nor compromise his principles. Of course if he had been a "good churchman" or a man of "definite opinions," which nowadays seem to be regarded as more important than Christianity itself, he would have gone a step or two forward instead of backward. He would have decked himself and his church in a way which might have won for himself a dozen or so of fanatical adherents from amongst the shop-boys and the hysterical women of the place, and sent a strong contingent of waverers over to dissent; but he was not a man of "definite opinions" in the commonly received acceptation of the term. He had definite opinions on the subject of fighting evil at all times and in all places, and he did not see the wisdom of entering on his new campaign by giving offence to numbers of worthy people who might be his most valuable allies.

It was outside and not inside the church that the evidences of new blood were the most marked. A working-man's club and library were the first secular work, and very soon a district chapel and a school were built for the use of the inhabitants of Brooksbank End, a community which often reminded Mr. Mayfield that ignorance and brutality amongst the working-people are not a peculiar monopoly of the mining and manufacturing districts. And he did not attend merely to the wants of his tattered and half-starving parishioners, neither did he confine his activity to the strictly parsonic field. He knew well enough how grey and dreary are the lives of many who have all the necessities and a few of the luxuries of life. As the long, dark, winter evenings came on he set to work, and he made some other people work in a fashion at which they themselves must have been surprised, at the task of amusing their fellow-townsmen. We had concerts, and penny-readings, and popular lectures, and papers on local subjects by local people. The latter were, perhaps,

the least entertaining; but they gave undeniable pleasure to the readers and their wives and families. The concerts were voted very good. The rector drew up the programmes and sold the tickets, sang and read whenever he was wanted, and I believe he would have swept out the room and fixed the platform had it been found necessary for him to do so.

After the escapade of the Rev. Onesiphorus Tulke, our late rector put a stop to all charity and missionary sermons whatever in the church, but Mayfield allowed them all a hearing. He gave up his pulpit to Mr. Laporte, of Bletherton, to preach on behalf of the Oxford mission to the Mackenzie River, and preached himself in favour of the Zion Society—Miss Dalgairns's particular care—when the appointed preacher fell ill at Martlebury, and could not come. This greatly softened the old lady towards him, and if he had only sent Mr. Laporte to the Mackenzie River, to look after the Oxford mission, instead of allowing him to gather money for it in Shillingbury, it is possible she might have taken him into full favour, and let bygones be bygones; but Miss Dalgairns, in this matter, represented the extreme wing of the irreconcilable faction. Honest, unselfish work, and a manifest striving after good, will make their mark, and before a year had passed we could laugh at all our dismal forebodings of incense and church-millinery, and congratulate ourselves on the possession of a rector who was before all a real good fellow, and with no touch of the Puritan in him.

One autumn, after the rector had been with us about four years, a company of strolling players came to Shillingbury, and fixed up their theatre in a malthouse belonging to the Black Bull, proposing to divert the nobility, gentry, and clergy of the town and neighbourhood with a series of representations of Shakespeare and the legitimate drama. The days had long passed when every little town had its theatre and its regular season; when veteran favourites went the circuit year after year, and were welcomed as old friends, and when recruits had to face criticism founded on the memories of the actors of those glorious days of old—days which always have been, and always will be, so much better than the deteriorated present. This company was evidently a section of some larger one which had gone to pieces, and, whatever genius there may have been in the whole, it is certain that the divine

spark shone very feebly in that section which fixed on Shillingbury for its abode; but the novelty of the thing, and the utter inability of nine-tenths of the Shillingbury folk to make comparisons with anything else in the dramatic world, filled the house very respectably, and everyone seemed satisfied. The rector evidently did not look upon the new comers with disfavour, for he postponed the first of the winter entertainments till they should be gone, and one morning all Shillingbury was convulsed with the report that the rector had been present at a performance the evening before.

In these days, in great cities, the stigma attaching to plays and play-actors is on the wane at a rapid rate, and justly so; but in Shillingbury, when I was young, it was quite another matter. I remember once my father bought a job lot of books, and amongst them the plays of Shakespeare. These he gave to me, and I arranged them with much pride on my shelves; but my mother—good soul!—coming in, advised me to hide them behind *The Whole Duty of Man*, for she would not like anyone to see that I had stage-plays amongst my books. This index of the popular mind will be enough to show how such an event as the presence of a clergyman at a playhouse would be received by the serious section of Shillingbury. From these, of course, he got condemnation, hot and strong, and even his apologists—a much larger body now than when he first came—admitted that he was perhaps going a little too far.

But the rector was by this time quite strong enough to take care of himself. Of course he had to have a battle with Miss Dalgairns, but he had become used to such warfare, and he fairly scored a point against her by telling her that if he went to the play, the actors came to church, and actors, as a rule, were not much given to church-going when on circuit. At last the final series of representations was announced, and there was a prospect that the people of Shillingbury would once more have to get on without a theatre as best they might.

But one morning the walls were covered with handbills, in which Mr. Farjohn, the manager, informed us that, owing to the unprecedented support given to the company in Shillingbury, a further series of representations had been arranged, in which the accomplished young artiste, Miss Adelaide Bellecourt, would appear.

On Tuesday next she would make her début in the character of Desdemona. Those who went that particular evening to see the new Desdemona were at least treated to a surprise, if not to a flawless rendering of the story of the Moor, for they saw one of the loveliest girls ever fashioned by Nature, and they saw her, moreover, almost entirely unspoiled by anything that art—i.e. dramatic art—could do in giving her the professional manner. She was clever, intelligent, and self-possessed; but anyone not entirely a novice could see that she moved and spoke as an amateur, and nothing else.

On the Wednesday evening, when Miss Bellecourt repeated her performance of Desdemona, there was hardly standing-room. On the third night the rector was there, and on the fourth he was there again, and, what was more wonderful, he persuaded his eldest sister, who now kept house for him, so far to forget the teachings of her home and childhood as to accompany him thither.

The truth was that Miss Bellecourt, though not much of an actress, was quite good enough to delight the Shillingbury public, and was, besides, pretty enough to have won the playdits of a more critical audience, in spite of her shortcomings. More fascinating, however, than her beauty was her natural grace of manner and movement. It was plain to everybody that she was in every way alien from the company with which she had associated herself. Her voice, and manner, and carriage proclaimed her a lady without dispute, and before long there was as much curiosity abroad as to what her antecedents could have been as there was praise of her acting. She was some young lady of high family who had run away from home, stricken with stage-fever. She was a great London actress, who had come to join Mr. Farjohn's company just to see how strolling actors lived. She was a ward in Chancery. She was the daughter of a clergyman, an excellent man, who had died of a broken heart, since his daughter had brought disgrace upon him. I do not think it was ever clearly made out who and what she really was; but I dare say all the speculations above-named were equally wide of the truth.

Miss Bellecourt, it was remarked, associated very little with the rest of the company, except when professionally engaged. She had lodgings with Timothy Agas, the parish clerk, who lived in a neat

little house just outside the church-gates; and from the tone in which honest Timothy spoke of his lodger, when he went to smoke his pipe at the White Horse, it was clear that he had not escaped the universal range of her fascination; though he had been heard to declare before she joined the company, that he didn't hold with play-actors, and had never been inside a theatre in his life. "She was a real lady, she was," Tim declared, "and yet she never gave herself any of the airs the other twopenny-halfpenny players did, and she paid her way regular, and that was more than many of the others could say. 'Tother day, when his wife was ill, Miss Bellecourt made all the beds, and cooked the dinner as well, and nobody never ate a better kidney-pudding than the one they sat down to that day; and she had made little pictures of the church, and the almshouses, and the grammar-school, all as natural as life."

Before a week had passed, Shillingbury discovered that Miss Bellecourt was on speaking terms with the rector. The latter naturally often went to see Timothy Agas, and there was nothing very wonderful in the fact that he should see something of Miss Bellecourt on these occasions. But the intimacy between our rector and the young actress was known and talked about on the very day he first spoke to her, and at the end of a week people smiled knowingly, and shook their heads when they spoke of it, and said they hoped ill might not come of it.

But I am doubtful whether anything more than the mere breath of scandal would have been the result, if a bad sore-throat had not intervened and caused the temporary withdrawal of Miss Bellecourt's name from the playbills. The ailment promised to be trifling at first; but at the end of a week the doctor made it his business to see Mr. Agas, and to tell him that the young lady had diphtheria, and that due care should be taken to prevent the spread of the disease.

Timothy Agas was a nervous little man, and he had no disposition to catch a dangerous malady even from such a charming young lady as Miss Bellecourt; so he began to cast about for a plan how he might best get her out of the house. He started many schemes, but at last he hit on one which did credit to his frugality, if not to his tender-heartedness. He proposed to remove Miss Bellecourt into a ruinous old cottage of his, which was at present

unoccupied, and to get an old woman from the workhouse to look after her.

It happened that, at the very time when Mr. Agas was preparing to carry his benevolent project into execution, the rector called on some matter of business. Mr. Mayfield, of course, saw that something was wrong, and what this something was Mr. Agas had to tell; and to his credit he seemed heartily ashamed of himself as he did so. The rector listened to his lame and stammering excuses, and then, with a hard look in his eyes, and a mouth firm set, informed Timothy that he might divest himself of all care with regard to Miss Bellecourt. It was not his custom to allow sick people to be turned out into the open street, for the hovel in which Mr. Agas proposed to lodge his invalid was little better than a ruin, and he would at once provide a place for her at the rectory.

That evening the sufferer was taken away in a close carriage, and lodged in a detached portion of the rectory which had formerly been used as a laundry; a trained nurse was sent for; the patient had everything that good nursing and attention could give, and in a week's time was out of danger. This step of the rector was undoubtedly a bold one; but his best friend could hardly have called it prudent. It might be benevolent, but it could hardly be wise for a parish priest to turn his rectory into a convalescent hospital for strolling actresses, for these were the terms most commonly employed in Shillingbury in speaking of the good parson's benevolence. He became the target of many an envious glance, the subject of many a sharp remark from outraged virtue, which demanded whether there were not enough deserving poor in Shillingbury for him to look after without lavishing charity on a girl who was most likely an outcast.

One day, when Miss Bellecourt was strong enough to get downstairs, but not to leave the house, the rector went to visit her. She was better—much better, almost strong again, she said; but the rector, as he looked at her flushed cheek and restless eye, was inclined to think that some mental mischief had set in to bar the physical improvement, and he was not mistaken.

The girl, after a few minutes' conversation of vague questions and inconsequent replies, burst into tears, and falling on her knees besought him to give her some counsel in her present trouble. Her story was this: She was the only child of a retired naval officer, and she had lived with

her father ever since he had left the service. Her mother had died when she was only two years old, and she had been left in charge of an old servant, a faithful, kindly soul, but one utterly unfitted to control a clever and undisciplined child. When she was seventeen the crisis of her life came, for her father, a weak, selfish man, put the coping-stone of folly to a not very wise life, by marrying a girl a little older than his daughter, whom he had taken out of a draper's shop in the town where he lived. The daughter made a brave effort to put up with the new order of things; but a month's experience taught her that she must find a home elsewhere. She went to live with an aunt at a distance, under a proviso that she should help to take care of the children, and look out for a situation for herself. She advertised and answered advertisements, but no one seemed to need her services, and she began to despair as the stipulated termination of her visit drew near.

One evening her uncle took her to the theatre. It was the first thing in the way of a play she had ever seen, and when she left the house she had determined, as so many other girls had done before, that she would make her fortune on the stage.

She had acted in private often; she had a good voice for singing, and had been well taught; so she considered herself quite justified in calling upon the manager the next morning. The manager looked at her as marketable commodity, and having heard her sing and recite a passage, told her to learn up a part in a piece he was going to bring out, and he would see what she was good for. In the end she got an engagement, and left the town with the company, who were going to play during the winter at Locksley, a manufacturing town in the North.

Locksley, besides being a great trade-centre, was a garrison town, and before long it was noised abroad in the barracks that an uncommonly fine girl was playing at the theatre. Two subs were commissioned to reconnoitre, and on their report a strong party of the officers went next night to see Miss Bellecourt, and amongst them went Captain Archibald Hoskyns.

It would be too much to trace at length the unwinding of the thread of the girl's fate. By means not difficult to be understood, Captain Hoskyns managed to get an introduction to her, and before three months were over, had persuaded her to marry him privately at a registry-office in

a neighbouring town. It was agreed that she should continue to play till her husband could find her a home, and after the company had finished at Locksley, they moved on to another town. Captain Hoskyns's duties of course prevented him from following his young wife; but he managed to spend some time with her. She was very anxious to have done with all mystery, and leave the stage; but the captain was rather slow to move in this matter, and there were some very stormy passages in their furtive marital interviews.

At last, one day, just as the company was about to make a fresh move, she received a letter with the Plymouth postmark from her husband, saying that he had been ordered out to India. He was sorry he could not see her before starting, but he hoped she would get on all right and maintain herself in her profession till he should be back again.

When she read the letter, she was almost mad with rage. Without a moment's consideration she started for Plymouth, determined to have it out with the cowardly sneak if he should yet be within her reach; but when she arrived at the dockyard, she found that the ship in which he was had sailed two days before. She made her way back, and naturally found the manager much incensed at the way in which he had been left in the lurch. A battle-royal followed, and the next day she threw up her engagement. Then, after a month's vicissitudes, during which time she had often known hunger, she found herself a member of Mr. Farjohn's company.

This was Miss Bellecourt's history. The rector promised to find out where her husband was now stationed, and bade her be of good heart. She certainly could, with her talent, find a living easily in a safer walk than that of the provincial stage. For the next week or so he busied himself in writing here and there in quest of some employment for the unfortunate girl. He sent, too, a strongly-worded letter to Captain Archibald Hoskyns, Mudnuggur Cantonments, Bengal, informing him of the present circumstances of his deserted wife. The farewell performances of Mr. Farjohn's company were now announced; Miss Bellecourt, after her recent severe indisposition, would appear once more in all her parts; and the last, a performance of *Othello*, was to be for her benefit. She had left the rectory by this time, and lodged in the town; and the rector,

mindful, perhaps, of some whispers which had made themselves heard, had only seen her once, and then in company with his sister. On the day of the last performance, as he was passing her lodgings, he saw the doctor coming out. He hurried on and asked who was ill in the house. The doctor smiled, so he was soon assured there was nothing serious the matter; but he stopped short, and let drop an expression of profound astonishment when he learnt the news that before many weeks Captain Hoskyns would be a proud father.

"She says she's married, but you never know," said the doctor. "It's lucky they're going, I think, for more reasons than one."

"Married, yes; and to a nice villain too. I didn't write to him half strongly enough, poor child—poor child!" said the rector.

The doctor nodded and passed on. As soon as he reached home the rector took his sister into confidence, and the next morning, instead of leaving with the rest of the company, Miss Bellecourt, accompanied by Miss Mayfield, went to Martlebury, and was established by that lady in comfortable lodgings at no great distance from the cathedral close, the rent being guaranteed by the Rev. Ambrose Mayfield, rector of Shillingbury.

The whispers anent the propriety of a clergyman taking so much interest in the welfare of a strolling actress which went about Shillingbury may have been very subdued; but they were loud enough to make themselves heard in the episcopal city of Martlebury, and taken in connection with the fact that the rector of Shillingbury had placed this young woman in lodgings in Martlebury, they swelled into a volume of sound which soon smote the ears of the bishop. The prelate knew Mayfield too well to charge him with even the thought of wrong, but he was, nevertheless, terribly annoyed; for the appearance of evil in such matters can often work as much harm as evil itself. He sent a letter, written in the kindest spirit, giving Mayfield every credit for his good intentions, and at the same time pointing out the fact that an opportunity had really been given to the enemy. Our rector took the bishop's letter in exactly the same spirit. He, indeed, recognised the possibility to which the bishop had referred; but he hardly imagined that the people around him could have imputed to him any other motives than those of which, in the consciousness of innocence, he was reasonably proud.

It was a terrible shock when he saw how completely his motives had been misjudged. In the first bitter half-hour after he had read the bishop's letter he paced up and down his library, half resolved to pack his portmanteau, and turn his back on Shillingbury for ever. How could he work with people who had rated him by such a standard? How could he shake hands with them, or give them words of friendly greeting? He answered the bishop's letter, thanking him for his fatherly counsel, and explaining his own position, promising at the same time to call at the palace at an early date.

He was, as it happened, more than usually busy at that particular time, and a month or more elapsed before he was able to get away. Meantime the weekly rent for the lodging and a sum for Mrs. Hoskyns's sustenance were regularly paid, and many very grateful letters came from the lady herself.

At last the rector fixed a day for his journey, and he was busy in his study providing for his absence on the morrow, when the housemaid came in and told him that Mrs. Towler, of Martlebury, wished to speak to him.

"Mrs. Towler! What does she want, Harriet? I know no one of the name of Towler."

"She's a stout woman, sir; and she have with her a young person who is carrying a baby," said Harriet.

Mrs. Towler was ushered into the room. She was a large woman, with a set smile of sycophancy. Her eye was moist, and her lip trembled, and she coughed discreetly behind her hand as she began:

"I've never had the pleasure of seein' you before, sir, for it was the lady as made all the arrangements; and very liberal they was, though no more than was proper, lookin' at the position of the parties;" and here a revolting grin overspread her face.

"Oh, I see. You're the landlady of the house where Mrs. Hoskyns is lodgin'?"

"Just so, sir; or rather where she have been lodgin', for she left the house yesterday mornin', sayin' as she was goin' out for a walk, and she have never been seen or heard of since, and never will again, in my opinion."

"Gone!" gasped the rector. "You don't mean to say——"

"Indeed I do, sir. Gone and left me with a lovely little innocent, as was three weeks old last Saturday; and of course, sir, what could I do better, bein' a lone widow-

woman myself, than bring the sweet little lamb over to you."

The rector stalked to the window, and stood some time silent, looking as if he was not quite sure that Mrs. Towler might not have acted otherwise.

"But did she leave no note, Mrs. Towler?" The lady solemnly shook her head. "Ah, but you'll hear of her soon," he went on. "Some sudden business must have called her away, or she may have heard from her husband."

"Well, there's no sayin', sir."

At this moment a loud squall from the sweet little lamb outside reminded the rector of the full weight of the burthen which had fallen upon him, so he told Mrs. Towler he would send his sister to her, and, considerably perturbed, made his way out of the room.

As he crossed the hall, Harriet handed him a letter which had just come in by post. It bore the Indian postmark, and he broke the seal and read:

"DEAR SIR,—I am sure you are a worthy man, and I quite believe the truth of all you wrote in your letter to me, so I will not answer it in the same strain. You have been duped by some artful woman, who has got hold of my name, and has had the impudence to claim the position rightly belonging to a lady who is at present living at Oakfield, South-sea, with half-a-dozen children belonging to me. If you write to Mrs. Hoskyns at the above address, she will confirm the accuracy of what I have said."

The rector crumpled the letter in his hands, and staggered as if he had been dealt a blow. He sat for some minutes with his face buried in his hands, and when he looked up again he had confessed to himself that the rod must be kissed with a good grace.

That evening Mrs. Towler returned to Martlebury, taking with her the young person and the baby; and, in spite of some very clever amateur detective work, no trace of the after-career of the above-named infant could ever be found. Nobody really believed the least harm of our good parson on account of his injudicious attempts to make smooth the path of the talented young artists who had rushed like a comet into our quiet system; but unkind hints were levelled at him, the finger of suspicion pointed to him all the same. The opportunity was too tempting to be lost. The rector went about his work with redoubled energy, and as years went by.

managed to live down some of the effects of his indiscretion. Some of them, but not all. When an innocent man is charged with a shameful offence, which is disproved by overwhelming evidence; when the presiding magistrate tells him that he leaves the court without a stain on his character, we know very well what it means. It means that a stigma will attach to his name as long as he lives; that, whenever it is mentioned amongst men, there will be noddings, and winkings, and whisperings, as the disproved slander is brought up; that this slander, scotched, not killed, will have power to bedim the memory of a dozen years of blameless life. It is a heavy penalty that men in Ambrose Mayfield's position have to pay for one folly, and it is probable that he took his lesson to heart, for never again in Shillingbury did he pose as the patron of actors or acting.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XX. MAGGIORE.

THE next night but one, Ada found herself, in still deeper perplexity, looking out from her window in a great hotel, across a lake on which a whole sky of brilliant stars were shining. The lake was narrow here; beyond it came a dim outline of dark hills, beyond and above them solemn ranges of snow mountains; she could hardly see them now, but she knew they were there; at dinner-time, when she sat between Mr. Warren and Clarence at the long table downstairs, they had been all beautiful in a glow of rose, and purple, and gold. But Ada could not care for them much; they were so cold and far away. She was more interested in the faces at the dinner-table; her eyes wandered restlessly from one to another, but she found nothing to comfort her. No one cared to look at her; the admiring stare of two or three young Germans was a little unpleasant. The Englishwomen looked stupid and hungry; all the benevolence and animation they had was bestowed on their own husbands and children. Ada, between her two guardians, neither of them attractive-looking men, did not catch their attention at all; and yet they could hardly have given her a glance without seeing that she was unhappy.

The poor child was completely puzzled. These two days had been spent in driving across country, and steaming up this lake, at the head of which they were now stay-

ing. They had spent last night in Varese, at the Albergo dell' Europa, with its pretty old courtyard and loggia full of flowers. Then they had driven on to Laverno, had gone on board there, and this was Ada's first acquaintance with the Lago Maggiore. Clarence and Mr. Warren walked up and down together, smoking their cigars, and she sat alone, looking dimly across the brilliant water, hardly seeing any of the beauty round her, as she wondered in a kind of hopeless despair what all this meant, where they were going, how this horrid journey was to end.

Clarence had laughed at her when she asked where they were going, and whether this was all on the way to Milan. Ada's education had been no great thing, and her geography was very weak; she was not much wiser when, after passing many stopping-places, Clarence pointed to a white and red town with campaniles, lying along at the foot of the hills, half-way up which a church stood out on a ledge, with a steep path of stations leading up to it, and said:

"That is Locarno; we are going to stop there for a day or two."

"And are we going to Milan afterwards?" said Ada.

"That depends on circumstances. Perhaps, if you are good," Clarence answered, and he walked away again.

In that great Locarno hotel, far too large for its guests, looking down with such dignity over town and lake, with its wide, cold, marble corridors and staircases, Ada felt like a lost child indeed as she wandered up to her room after dinner; she did not care to go out, and the reading-room seemed dreadful, with all those strange people in it. Suddenly at the top of the stairs she met a kind, smiling face; it was that of the French *femme-de-chambre*, who was touched by the sight of this pretty young demoiselle all alone. She held out a pink camellia to Ada as she passed.

"How pretty!" said Ada, smiling too.

"*Mais je vous l'offre!*" said the pleasant voice, and Ada, taking the flower, felt quite a warm little sensation of comfort and kindness. When she was in her room she sat down and wrote another long letter to Gerald; she did not quite know where to send it, but it was necessary to tell him all her troubles; and yet this was a difficult business, for she could hardly explain what they were. After that she sat for a long time at her open window. The night was warm and still; the silver jingle of bells

in the town, broken by a deeper clang now and then, was passing into silence, for Locarno went to sleep early. Ada had pulled an armchair to the window, and sat there peacefully. She liked her little room, with its smart green furniture, and the pleasant *femme-de-chambre* made her feel safe; it seemed long since she had had a kind woman to speak to. She had almost fallen asleep in her chair, when she was startled by Clarence's laugh; it sounded so near, she thought at first that he was in the room. Then she remembered that his room was next door, and had a balcony; he and Mr. Warren were now standing out under the stars talking.

"Yes, I mean it," said Warren rather angrily, in answer to the laugh. "You have managed the whole thing about as badly as you could. How long do you suppose I am going to kick my heels in these out-of-the-way corners, dodging that brother of yours?"

"The thing is your own fault, remember," said Clarence.

"Upon my word, Litton, I believe you think I am as big a rascal as yourself. I suppose you would have pocketed the letters, and opened and read them, and flung them in the fire. No, I leave that sort of thing to gentlemanly scamps like you."

"You couldn't have done it; but you might have brought them to me, and in her interest I might have done what I chose," said Clarence. "Look here, though, I begin to think you are tired of the whole business. Suppose we give it up, or let it alone for a year or two."

"No, I won't do that," said Mr. Warren; "I see it is no use trusting to you; you go on shilly-shallying, till I expect my prize will slip through my fingers altogether. Tired! no, except of being patient. I wonder how you and Fane came to have such a little piece of perfection for a sister."

"We are luckier than she is," said Clarence, half laughing. "You have no right to be angry with me, though, Warren. I've reminded you before that there was a condition."

"Condition be hanged!"

"Come, I never pretended that I could make her like you."

"You have not tried," said Warren sulkily.

"As it happens, I have, and without much success. The fact is, she is too young to see your advantages clearly. Take my advice, and wait for a year or two."

"Till she meets some fellow she does like? No, I am not going to be cheated in that way. If this comes to nothing, you and I dissolve partnership; your brother loses his post, and I wash my hands of the whole ungrateful lot of you."

There was a short pause. Ada sat at her window like a stone. She never thought of moving; indeed, she could hardly have moved, for her limbs, as well as her mind, seemed to be stiffened with horror. This, then, was the explanation, the realising of all her presentiments. Presently Clarence spoke again. He was evidently putting a strong restraint on himself; Ada could hear him drumming with his fingers on the balustrade.

"I am ready to fulfil my part of the bargain—you know that," he said.

"To further the marriage by every means in your power. That's what you are doing, is it?" said Mr. Warren.

"I have done and said what I could for you. What more is in my power? What more do you want me to do?"

"I'll think about it," said his friend. "Perhaps I may speak to the young lady myself to-morrow. She must consent before that firebrand fellow catches us up, or there's an end of it."

"We are out of his way here, just off the road," said Clarence. "He may be cutting along behind those hills at this moment."

"On his way to Milan," said Mr. Warren; and both the men laughed.

After this Ada started up, and shut her window quickly and sharply. It was impossible for her to hear any more; she did not think or care whether they knew she had been listening.

The child's terror was intense, aggravated by the silence of the night and the loneliness of the great hotel. She lay down on her bed, and with eyes staring into the darkness, tried to think what she could do. Telegraph to Gerald? But where would a telegram catch him? Could she speak to the manager of the hotel, who looked like a kind, obliging little man? But would he have strength or authority to take her out of the hands of these men? Would any of the English people in the hotel help her? Surely they must, if they could know and believe all; and yet there had not been one face among them to which she cared to appeal. Could she run away—escape back to England? She had no money but what her brothers gave her, and at present there were only a few francs in her purse.

As one despairing thought after another crossed her mind, she began to think that she had known and expected this all along, ever since Mr. Warren met them at Basle—no, long before that, ever since she first saw the horrible man with Clarence at Euston Station, and began to be annoyed by his staring, his compliments, and all his other impertinences. Then she sobbed and cried for a long time, till her head ached violently, and she was too tired to cry any more. Then she remembered that she had not said her prayers, and tumbling off the bed she knelt down for a few minutes and hid her face. She did not pray in words, or even consciously in thought; she just seemed to lay herself down, her trouble and her loneliness, in the sight of the only Father she had; and after that she crept upon the bed again, and fell asleep at once like a baby.

The next morning it was raining; the lake and the distant mountains were shrouded in mist, the clouds hung low down the sides of the hills, and all the lovely colours had faded away.

Clarence knocked at Ada's door between nine and ten, and called out to know if she was ready for breakfast.

"I am not coming down. I don't want any breakfast," Ada answered.

"What's the matter? Are you ill?" said Clarence, and he turned the handle impatiently, but the door was locked.

"Please go away," said Ada.

This, however, was not at all her brother's intention. When Ada shut her window so suddenly last night, he had been quick enough to understand what had happened. He had said nothing to Warren; and on the whole he was not sorry that things should be brought to a crisis, and that Ada should clearly understand her position. He was determined to be very firm with her; he had no idea of being ruined by the obstinacy of a girl. As Warren was decided, it was plain that he must be decided too.

"I am not going away, Ada," he said in a low voice. "Don't make a scene. Open the door, will you?"

"I am not coming down," said Ada from the inside.

"I don't care; I want to speak to you."

After a little more insisting she opened the door. Clarence came in and shut it behind him.

"Now," he said, "what is all this fuss about?"

The girl stood before him at first with-

out speaking. She had done her best to cry her prettiness away; her cheeks were pale; her eyelids were red and swelled; and though she could not wash the blue out of her eyes, or the ruddy gold out of her hair, she was a dismal little object enough when Clarence looked at her. For a moment he was touched, and could not help speaking kindly.

"Poor little girl! Why, what have you been doing that for?" he said, and he was stooping to kiss her, but Ada pulled herself away from him and walked to the window.

Clarence sat down in the corner of her sofa and looked at her.

In a moment she turned to him again, and said in a trembling voice:

"Clarence, I heard all that you were saying last night—you and Mr. Warren—in your balcony."

"And I suppose you think you heard nothing good. Listeners seldom do."

"How dare you, Clarence! My window was open, and you came and talked there. Anyone might have heard you—anyone in the hotel. You are both dreadfully wicked," said Ada, so nervously that she was obliged to lean against the window. "I can't say all that I think."

"Perhaps that is a good thing for me," said Clarence half aloud.

"At first, of course, I could not understand you, but afterwards I did," Ada went on. "Clarence, I can hardly believe now that it was you. You always used to be kind to me."

"Shut up; don't be sentimental, my dear child," said Clarence. "Try to look at the reasonable side of things. Here are you on my hands without a penny. Here is a rich man, and not a bad fellow either, who has been in love with you for years. You couldn't surely expect me to snub him—at any rate, without consulting you?"

"Now you are telling lies," said Ada more calmly. "For years! You know that is impossible, for the man never saw me in his life till last autumn."

"Don't be more polite than necessary," said Clarence slowly, and smiling. "He fell in love with your picture when you were a little girl, and proposed the idea to me then which he wishes to carry out now. Rather pretty, on the whole, isn't it? We thought the quietest and best plan was to bring you abroad, and then, when you had made up your mind to it, you could be married at Milan, and come back to

England later in the summer. However, Warren will tell you all that himself."

Clarence Litton was not bad enough for his position. He talked to his sister in this cold, callous, brutal way, while in his heart he wished Warren and his money and the whole scheme on the other side of the world.

This very struggle made his manner to Ada more odious. She stared at him in a sort of bewilderment, but her fears of the night before had almost passed away.

"I have a plan, too," she said. "I am going to stay in my room here, and not come down at all, till you and Mr. Warren are gone away, and till Gerald comes to fetch me. He will come. I shall write and telegraph to all sorts of places, and if you try to prevent me from doing what I choose, I shall tell all the people here, and ask them to help me."

"A sensation for Locarno," said Clarence, stroking his moustache. "I congratulate you. It is a very clever plan indeed. So you won't have Warren? Gerald will be as much obliged to you as I am."

"What do you mean?" said Ada.

"I think the facts were alluded to last night in the balcony, so I hardly need repeat them. Warren has it in his power to ruin me and Gerald, and if you refuse him, he means to give himself that pleasure at once. I see you think me very rough and plain-spoken; but you must remember that you have brought this on yourself. You have precipitated things by hearing what you were not meant to hear. You would have learnt it all in a much gentler fashion if you had gone to bed like a sensible young woman. Who was to guess that you were staring at that hour?"

Ada sat down, frowning, and covered her face with her hands for a moment.

"You puzzle me so that I can hardly think," she said, looking up. "What do you mean? Does Gerald know?"

"He does. We talked it over in the autumn."

"He can't wish it," said Ada in a whisper.

"Well, no; he has a prejudice against Warren, as you know. But he quite understood what the consequences of your refusal would be."

"Mr. Warren must be a dreadfully wicked, cruel man," said Ada, after a long pause.

"Not at all," said Clarence; "a man has a right to use his advantages. I got into

certain scrapes a few years ago. He helped me out of them. I owe him a good deal of money and gratitude too. If I ask you to pay my debt for me, you may perhaps remember that I have always done what I could for you. Of course he is rather old for you—but you will be thoroughly spoilt, and will have everything that money can give you. Besides, if you consent, Warren will take Gerald into partnership; I have every reason to think so. Still, he has his life before him, and he is not in Warren's power as I am. Your refusal means total ruin to me."

After this Ada was quite still for a minute or two. Then she began to cry and sob passionately, hiding her face on the back of the chair. A few broken words made their way now and then.

"Oh, how miserable I am! How cruel you are! What shall I do! Oh, Gerald! I want Gerald!"

Clarence sat and looked at her with more anger than pity. Presently he got up, and said impatiently:

"I had no notion you were such a baby!"

Then he went out of the room and shut the door. In the corridor, outside, he met the *femme-de-chambre*, who looked at him rather oddly, for Ada's sobs were quite loud enough to be heard, and suggested that *mademoiselle* was ill.

"Yes, she is ill; she is weak and hysterical; she has had no breakfast," said Clarence. "Will you look after her, and I will send up her breakfast at once?"

"Oui, monsieur," said the Frenchwoman cheerfully.

Clarence thought it was best to let the child alone, and he did not go to her door again for some hours. He had hopes that her generosity, her love for Gerald, and for himself too, unworthy as he was, might lead her to give in without further trouble. He did not like scenes, though he bore them stoically enough, and he preferred fair means to foul, when it was possible to come off so easily.

He went to Ada again early in the afternoon. He knocked, and she came to the door, but she would not unlock it or let him in. Clarence took this quietly; he thought it better not to storm or insist.

"How are you now?" he said. "Have they taken good care of you?"

"I am quite well, thank you," said Ada. "Listen, I want to tell you something."

"Let me come in, then; I don't like listening at the door."

"No; I have been thinking of all you said this morning, and I will not see him or speak to him, and I shall give you no answer at all till I have seen Gerald."

"Hang it, won't you?" muttered Clarence, but he said aloud: "That sounds reasonable. In the meanwhile you had better put your hat on, and I'll take you for a walk. Look out of the window; the weather is splendid. I'll take you up to that church on the hill; they say it is worth seeing. Don't be afraid; he is asleep in the smoking-room."

"No, thank you," said Ada; "I would rather stay where I am."

"As you please," said Clarence. He could not go on arguing in the passage, so he went away and rejoined Mr. Warren. He had only told him that Ada was tired and nervous, and preferred staying in her room. He had no doubt, he said, that she would come down to dinner.

It was a lovely afternoon, the sun was shining softly over the lake, and all the lights and shadows and varied colours were deep and intense after the rain. The *femme-de-chambre*, curious and good-natured, came in and brought Ada a fat pink rose. In the morning, in answer to her attempts at comfort, Ada had told her that she was tired of travelling, and wanted to go home to her youngest brother, who was left in England, but the eldest brother would not let her go.

Having presented the rose, Susanne remarked that "*ces messieurs*" were gone out for a walk together.

This encouraged Ada to carry out a plan she had thought of. Yesterday she had seen maps of the lake country and North Italy hanging on the wall in the reading-room, and it seemed to her that by studying these she might get an idea of where she was, and where Gerald was likely to be, if by happy fate he had left England after receiving her first letter. Besides, with all her obstinacy, she was beginning to be a little tired of this imprisonment. So when Susanne was gone, she brushed her curls, and darted out into the passage, and down one of the broad staircases on her way to the reading-room.

There was a little bustle going on in the house, the daily bustle at this time when the afternoon train from the St.

Gothard and Ballinzona had just come in. Susanne was hurrying to the top of the stairs to meet a flushed, tired maid, loaded with bags. Ada had passed this woman a moment before without looking at her, but the maid had lifted her eyes and stared, and turned her head to look after the slight young figure hurrying down. There were one or two parties of strangers in the hall, and large piles of luggage; the little manager, with his anxious face, was bowing himself politely from one to the other. One lady had just walked into his office, and was stooping over a book there; an old lady outside, very much wrapped up, was scolding her maid who had lost something. There was a good deal of talk and noise; half-a-dozen people had to be attended to at once. Ada slipped through and past it all, along half the polished, shining length of the dining-room, and through one of the tall, glass doors into the room beyond, with the large table scattered with papers, and the maps and the carved book-case against the wall. There was no one in the room. Ada went slowly from one map to another. She had been standing a few minutes before one that interested her, a large map of the lakes, in which she saw plainly how she had been brought back from Como here, when a door opened and one of the strange ladies came into the room. Ada did not look round till she was suddenly conscious that this person had followed her to the corner by the window where she was standing. Then she started violently, looked round, looked up, and instantly there were two arms round her, and her head was resting against somebody's shoulder, and a warm face was laid against hers, and Theo said, with an odd little catching in her breath:

"My dear—my dear child, so I have really found you!"

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BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XLIII. ANASTASIA'S GRATITUDE.

It might be supposed that her narrow escape, through Archie's heroism, from sharing her mother's frightful fate would have stirred Anastasia to remorse for making him infamous. But this would be to take an altogether one-sided view of the case. Let us look at it from the young lady's point of view for a moment. It is true, she did not attempt to commit suicide, but this was due to her own strength of mind, not to Archie's innocence. Had he treated a weak-minded girl as he had treated her—won her virgin affections and then flung them aside as an outworn glove—she would probably enough have attempted, or committed suicide. Therefore, the press and public were not in the least misled on the point of Archie's guilt, but only on the point of her own strength of mind; and if she chose to misrepresent herself as feeble and a fool, why that piece of self-depreciation was no one's discredit or concern but her own.

Thus the case stood before Archie had rescued her. How did the fact that she owed him her life affect it? In this way. Either, as the Ryecote Herald suggested, he saved her because his old love was reawakened by her attempt at suicide for his sake, or he saved her because she was a woman—not this woman or that woman—but simply a woman in danger. In the first case, to confess that she had not attempted suicide at all would be to turn him back from the path of repentance and reparation; in the second case, she owed him no special gratitude for doing for her what he would have done for any other woman in the world.

Anastasia, being a very clear-headed young person, had all this definitely enough in her mind, and was not moved in the least, therefore, to make a clean breast of that business of her immersion in the mill-race. She was delighted to pose in the romantic attitude assigned to her in the Ryecote Herald—whose report was certain to be copied, or echoed, by every journal in England—and she was not without hope of making the romance of the reporter's version true. If Archie had not rescued her because he loved her again, he might yet love her again because he had rescued her. No one knew better than Anastasia that people in general, and generous people in particular, feel kindly towards those whom they benefit, and regard those whose fortunes they have made, or whose lives they have saved, as, in a sense, their creatures, with an affection which has, in fact, the same root as that of a father towards those who owe him their being. No one, we say, knew this better than Anastasia, for a helpless, wistful dependence was the fly to which all her fish rose invariably. Her very face, and especially her plaintive, pathetic, and appealing eyes, seemed to mark this part out for her as her rôle. "She had the eyes of a dog," to use the Homeric expression, but not of the shameless, Homeric dog, but of the faithful, wistful, fearful, fawning spaniel, which looks up to its master for everything with a timorous trustfulness.

Anastasia, then, having over and over again put this principle to the proof—that the way to make people, especially generous people, like you, is, not to benefit them, but to allow them to benefit you—had some hope that Archie would feel kindly towards her in proportion to the great service he had rendered her. At any rate, whether, as the Ryecote Herald suggested,

such kind feeling was the cause of his heroic rescue of her, or whether it would be, as she hoped, its consequence, it would be mere and mad fatuity to freeze the flow of such feeling at its source by a confession of her imposition.

Such, as neatly as we can describe it, was the attitude of Anastasia's mind towards Archie, and his rescue of her after she had read the *Ryecote Herald's* superb description of the affair. She read it late in the afternoon of the next day in bed, for she had no clothes, and those of the daughter of the kindly neighbour who housed her would not fit her, she said—were not fit for her, she thought. Archie might call to enquire after her, and it would be better that he should not see her at all, but should hear that she was ill in bed, than that he should find her in a dowdy dress. She would not rise, therefore, till the clothes she had sent for to her *Ryecote* dressmaker, etc., first thing in the morning, arrived. The clothes arrived at last, but no Archie appeared to appreciate them. Probably he was himself worn out, and compelled to rest after the exhaustion and excitement of the past night. But neither did he appear next morning, and as the day wore on Anastasia resolved upon a bold stroke. As he did not come to enquire after her, she must go to enquire after him. Indeed, common gratitude compelled her—as soon as her strength and her sorrow would permit her—to relieve her surcharged heart of what little of the debt she owed the saviour of her life as weak words could express. Absorbed by this feeling, Anastasia, clothed in crape, and closely veiled, crept out of the house, and down the village street to the doctor's.

She was fortunate. Mrs. John was not in, while Archie was, and was up—which he had not been all yesterday. She did not send in her name or card, but said simply that she wished to see Mr. Guard for a few minutes. Archie leaped at once to the conclusion that the young lady, the servant described as tall and closely veiled, must be Ida, and hurried therefore eagerly into the room.

Anastasia! It was a double disappointment. The woman of all others he least cared to see in place of her for whom of all others he longed most.

"Miss Bompas!"

"I intrude? I could not help it—I had to come to say— May I sit down? I am not well," falteringly and appealingly.

Archie stepped forward to hand her a

chair, but before he could reach it, she exclaimed with a kind of sob, "Oh, Archie!" and sank overcome into his arms.

At this moment the door opened, and Ida entered—entered only to shrink back as though stabbed. She got back to the door and to the station, she hardly knew how, though any one meeting her might have thought her a model of stately composure. Anastasia had seen her swift entry and exit, but Archie had neither seen nor heard them. His back was turned to the door, which in his eager entrance to meet, as he hoped, Ida, he had not shut behind him. Thus Ida came and went like a shadow, seen only by Anastasia, who discreetly said nothing of the vision.

Archie having disengaged himself as soon as he could, consistently with common politeness, from the clinging embrace of the overpowered and overpowering Anastasia, helped her to a chair, but remained himself standing, as an expression of his hope that the interview would be brief.

Anastasia, leaning back in the chair, overcome, looked up at him with an appeal as for life in her wide wistful eyes.

"Let me get you a glass of wine, Miss Bompas," said Archie as an answer to the look, in a tone of the iciest conventionality, stepping to the bell.

"Don't ring!" she cried, clutching his arm. "I must speak to you alone—I must say—I must try to say how your heroism in saving my poor life at the risk of your own—"

"Pray say nothing about it," said Archie, disengaging his arm almost roughly, and speaking with a fretful impatience. He, too, had read the *Ryecote Herald*, and was disgusted with every line of the report; but most of all, of course, with its suggestion that it was the revival of his love for Anastasia which had moved him to risk his life for hers. "Pray say nothing about it, Miss Bompas; I merely did what anyone would have done, and what I should have done for anyone," laying upon the last word a stress whose meaning was not to be mistaken.

"Oh, why did you save my life?" cried she wildly. "Death were better than this!" burying her face in her hands.

Archie did not say what passed through his ungallant mind: "You didn't seem to think so at the time."

Taking prompt advantage of her being unable to see and intercept him, he stepped across to the bell and rang it. There was silence till the maid appeared. She

took longer than usual to answer the bell, because she was only at the other side of the door eavesdropping. However, Anastasia, though she heard the bell, said nothing in the interval, for she knew not what to say. She remained with her face buried in her hands, meditating her next step, without much result.

Upon the appearance of the maid Archie asked :

"Is Dr. Dakin in?"

"Yes, sir."

"Pray ask him to come here for a moment."

He had learned by bitter experience the danger of being alone for any time with this woman, and he meant to put her as a patient in need of a restorative into the doctor's hands and to retire under this cover. However, Anastasia, divining his design, started up suddenly and said distractedly :

"You think my reason is gone again? But no—not now—not yet!"

Having shot this Parthian dart, alluding to her attempt at suicide and to the doctor's being an expert in lunacy, Anastasia tottered to the door, where the doctor met and ushered her out with a bow so elaborate as to seem ironical.

Anastasia was wildly wroth with Ida. Yes, it was chiefly against her rival that her fury rose and raged. She would give the world for revenge, and especially for a form of vengeance which would inflict her own agonies upon her rival by alienating Archie and Ida as widely and hopelessly as she and Archie seemed alienated now. Fortune favoured her. She found when she reached home a weapon fitted to her hand which would, she hoped, help to do the work. By the afternoon's post there came for her a letter from her lawyer, accompanying a packet of Archie's letters, and explaining the reason of their being returned. After his heroic rescue of her, Miss Bompas would probably not care to persist in the suit for breach of promise, but, if she were so inclined, no barrister could be found to ask for, or jury to give, a verdict against her gallant preserver. In truth, the lawyer knew the case to be hollow and hopeless. Anastasia, with a mind full and furious with thirst for revenge, thought first of enclosing the most compromising of the letters to Ida. But on re-reading them with the view of choosing the warmest for this purpose, she came upon one which altered her plan. It ran thus :

"DEAREST NESTY.—You thank me as

extravagantly as if we were strangers—as if I needed other thanks than your forgiveness. You do forgive me freely, fully, wholly—don't you? I did not expect it; I can hardly believe it. I shall not really believe it till I hear it from your lips—have it signed and sealed by your lips. Come over this afternoon, as I cannot come to you. Coast clear at four o'clock. Be sure you come.—Ever and ever yours,

"ARCHIE."

This letter, which referred to some lover's quarrel in Cambridge, made up by one of Archie's extravagant presents, was undated, and it occurred to Anastasia so to date it as to make it seem to refer to Archie's rescue of her, and to the meeting that afternoon which Ida must have considered as the proverbial "*amoris integratio*." She had merely to date in figures the year and the month, as well as the day of the month, to prevent the detection or suspicion of forgery. It needed only such a note to confirm the impression Ida must have got from the spectacle of Anastasia in Archie's arms almost at the very hour named for the tryst in the letter. As for the chance of the misunderstanding being cleared up at the next meeting of the cousins, this—on Dick's information—Anastasia counted small; for there would in all probability be no such meeting. Archie had pledged himself to quit England, and Ida to see him but once before he went; and it was plainly to this farewell meeting she had come that afternoon. She was little likely to come again if the impression then made upon her was confirmed beyond the reach of a doubt; as it must be by this letter.

But how was the letter to be conveyed to Ida? To send it directly would, of course, be to invite suspicion. It must be sent through Dick, and Dick fortunately turned up that evening. Anastasia was chilling in her reception of him, and gave him soon to understand that his visits must cease. Dick was a good deal taken aback. Had the shock of her mother's horrible death suddenly rendered this not very promising young penitent proper to primness? He demanded an explanation. Anastasia gave it with great dignity. She and Mr. Guard had become reconciled. Dick could not and would not believe in such a reconciliation, but ridiculed it till Anastasia was provoked into producing the conclusive letter. Dick was staggered. After all, why should she throw him over unless she had found a new protector? Dick.

eager to be convinced, was convinced. Instead of being most dejected and wretched at his dismissal and replacement by Archie, he was in wild spirits, and rallied Anastasia upon the recovery of her first love. He gracefully attributed Archie's rescue of her and return to his allegiance to his desperate dread of the breach of promise suit. To this Anastasia condescended to make the conclusive answer that all the letters on which alone the suit rested were burned in the fire, which left her nothing in all the world—piteously.

Having thus guarded against the possibility of a suspicion springing up in Dick's mind that the letter was an old one, Anastasia affected a great eagerness to get it back; and, on Dick's manifesting an equal eagerness to keep it, she again became piteous about the state of utter destitution to which the fire had brought her. Dick took the very palpable hint, and, by making over to her in his reckless way all the money he had in his purse, put a sudden stop to her importunity about the letter.

It will be seen that Anastasia managed this business well—better even than she had hoped. For she soon found that both Dick and Ida were to go to London on Monday for a visit of an indefinite length; she lost nothing, therefore, by her dismissal of Dick; while Ida would be beyond the reach of any personal explanation from Archie.

Thus the estrangement of the cousins—thrice desirable, not only for the mortification of her rival, but as the first step towards the recovery of Archie—not even yet despaired of—seemed to have been skilfully and securely contrived by the ready resources of Anastasia.

She would have been still more confident and exultant if she could have followed Dick in spirit to The Keep. Hurrying home he at once sought his aunt.

"Those two really have made it up," he exclaimed with unusual vivacity.

"So I hear."

"Why, who told you?"

"Ida."

"Ida!"

Then his aunt told him what she had extracted, by dogged pumping, out of Ida on her return, looking like death.

"In his arms! By Jove! then it is true. It was the meeting the letter appointed."

"What letter?"

Dick produced it. When she had read it, she exclaimed, throwing back her head in amazement:

"Well! They're made for each other, those two. But," glancing sharply at Dick, "how did you get hold of the letter?"

"Oh, easily enough," answered he carelessly. "Having heard on good authority in Ryecote that they were reconciled, I looked her up to get to the real truth of the matter. When I charged her chaffingly with circulating a report she knew to be false, she produced the letter. I think she'd have shown it to anyone, she was in such spirits about it."

"And allowed anyone to take it away?" with another sharp glance at Dick.

"For a consideration."

"Do you mean to say she sold it to you?"

"Yes; she sold it to me, and well too."

"What a woman! She's capable of forging it," with a sudden suspicion of its genuineness.

"With what object? No; I don't think it a forgery. But Ida would know his writing."

This he spake, knowing that Ida wouldn't read a letter not intended for her eyes. His aunt might, however, ask her to identify the writing, giving as her reason the contents of the letter. The same thought was in his aunt's mind at the moment.

"She'll not read it, Dick."

"No; but she could glance at the writing and say if it is her cousin's hand. You can explain why you wish to know."

His aunt understood his meaning, and approved of it. It would be another and a cruel stab to Ida; but the sooner this unworthy love was stabbed to death and she put out of the pain of it, the better.

"I shall ask her," she said, quitting the room to seek Ida.

Ida was lying on a couch in her own room, prostrate, and in a kind of stupor, from which Mrs. Tuck's knock and voice roused her. She rose, unlocked the door, and confronted Mrs. Tuck with a face so lost—to use the word which most nearly describes its expression—that Mrs. Tuck's heart was wrung with pity.

"I'm so sorry to disturb you, dear—there, lie down; no, no; pray lie down—I shall not stay a moment." After Ida lay down Mrs. Tuck remained silent for a full minute, nervously and lovingly stroking the girl's hair the while. At last she said, speaking with a nervous haste: "Ida dear, Richard has been for your sake to see that woman to ask her to contradict the report she spread all over Ryecote of her recon-

ciliation with your cousin. But, instead of contradicting it, she produced this letter, which she declares he wrote to-day to her. It says she mustn't thank him for saving her life, as her forgiveness of his desertion of her is thanks enough; and it asks her to come and see him this afternoon at four—when no one else would be in—and to seal then their reconciliation with her lips. We think the letter must be a forgery, dear, and we want you just to glance at the writing, and say it is not your cousin's."

Ida took the letter, but her hand trembled so, and her eyes were so dim and dizzy, that she could see nothing distinctly for some time. When she could see distinctly, the letter dropped, and she hid her face in both hands.

"My poor child! My poor girl!" cried Mrs. Tuck with exceeding tenderness, kissing her forehead again and again.

This warmth of tenderness melted the icy reserve which usually hid Ida's heart as with a stone. She put both her arms about Mrs. Tuck's neck, hid her face upon her shoulder, and broke down in a passion of sobs heartrending to hear from so self-contained a girl.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

LEICESTERSHIRE. PART I.

ALTHOUGH between the counties of Warwick and Leicester old Watling Street forms only an arbitrary frontier, yet the ancient highway corresponds with a veritable division in soil and people. The broad green pastures of Leicestershire were long the home of a race of sturdy yeomen, whose Danish blood has manifested itself in many ways. Leicestershire is distinctly less feudal than its neighbour, and, though the Norman barons sprinkled the land thickly with their castles, most of them were razed to the ground in the days of the Plantagenets, and have left few traces of their existence. There are fewer great abbeys and more fine parish churches than in other adjacent counties, and the county has more to boast of in its great graziers and cattle-breeders than in its great lords or distinguished churchmen. Its fame as a hunting county, with its noted hunting-centres of Melton Mowbray and Market Harborough, is indeed of comparatively modern growth. But long before the wealthy and leisured sportsmen of modern times had begun to resort to its grassy vales, its squires and yeomen loved the

sound of the horn and the merry cry of hounds, and to meet, when the fields were clear and the work of the year was done, to hunt the timid hare and wily fox. The stout peasantry of Leicestershire are of ancient fame for their diet of beans, and there are sundry parishes which once had the credit of raising beans exclusively as the food of their population. But there was no lack of bacon either, to flavour the dish, nor of good, wholesome cheese, nor of any of the products of the dairy. The industrial population of the county seem to be of a somewhat different race, which has migrated southwards from the spurs of the great Pennine range of hills, about which have sprung up all our enduring industrial settlements.

Divided from the hill-ranges of Derbyshire by the great basin of the Trent, Charnwood Forest forms the one wild, rough portion of the county, with Bardon Hill as its chief summit. And Bardon Hill commands a vast, wide prospect, a perfect ocean of land, with Lincoln Minster to be made out in the extreme distance, some sixty miles away, and all the wealthy midlands lying at its feet.

Oh, Charnwood, be thou called the choicest of thy kind,

The like in any place what flood hath apt to find,
No tract in all this isle, the proudest let her be,
Can show a sylvan nymph for beauty like to thee.

The sylvan beauties of Charnwood, however, are of the past. The axe has left its sides bare and desolate, the wood-nymphs have taken flight, and a railway now runs through the heart of the former forest. Yet are there many places of interest on its borders. There, in a corner of the county, lies Ashby de la Zouche, which Scott has made famous for its tournament in Ivanhoe. The scene of the tournament is pointed out in a field about a mile north-westward of the town, near the village of Smisby, just on the borders of Derbyshire. The castle is of later date, partly of the Tudor period, a rich and magnificent ruin, dismantled by the Parliament after the collapse of the King's cause in the civil wars. Here was the seat of Lord Hastings, beheaded by Richard the Third.

Close by is Coleorton, the seat of the Beaumonts, a family of literary and artistic culture, of which the dramatic poet of Elizabeth's days was a distinguished member.

The haunt of him who sang how spear and shield
In civil conflict met on Bosworth Field;
And of that famous youth, full soon removed
From earth, perhaps by Shakespeare's self approved.
Fletcher's associate, Jonson's friend beloved.

Here Wordsworth was an honoured guest, in the early years of the century. Perhaps the cedar-tree still flourishes,

Planted by Beaumont's and by Wordsworth's hands.

But the original seat of the family, and the birthplace of the dramatist, lies nearer the forest :

Beneath yon eastern ridge, the craggy bound,
Rugged and high of Charnwood Forest ground,
Stand yet, but, stranger, hidden from thy view,
The ivied ruins of forlorn Grace Dieu.

The nunnery of Grace Dieu was founded by Lady Roesin de Verdun in the thirteenth century, and is thus described in the records of the commissioners who were employed in the suppression of religious houses in the reign of Henry the Eighth : "This house standeth low in a valley, upon a little brook, in a solitary place, compassed round with a high and strong stone wall, within which the nuns had made a garden in resemblance of that upon Mount Olivet." It is further recorded that this sequestered retreat of simple-minded, religious women was "sould by the king's commissioners to John Bewman, gent," who, it seems, had been the steward of the convent, and was besides a surveyor of the county. This John Beaumont's son, Francis, became a serjeant-at-law, and afterwards a judge, and the judge's second son, Sir John, who eventually succeeded to his father's estate, was himself a poet of the minor degree, the chronicler in rhyme of Bosworth Field, alluded to in Wordsworth's lines. To this poem of Bosworth Field we shall presently recur, as Sir John is a good witness, from his intimate knowledge of the scene of the combat, of which his grandfather might have had many stories to tell, derived from actual eye-witnesses of the fight.

Francis Beaumont, the dramatist, was the younger brother of this Sir John, and in 1596 was admitted a gentleman commoner at Broadgate Hall, Oxford, described as a principal nursery for students in civil and common law, a nursery in the literal sense of the word, one would think, if the mass of students were of the like age as Beaumont, who was ten years old, it seems, or, perhaps, twelve, when he entered college. But that was a precocious age ; Francis Bacon was only twelve when he was sent to Cambridge ; life began earlier and ended sooner, it seems, than now, and for all the long list of plays that witness to the industry of the collaborators, Beaumont at his death had barely passed his thirtieth year. These later,

busy years were passed not in Leicestershire, but on Bankside, near the Globe Theatre, where Beaumont and Fletcher lived together in an intimate friendship wonderful to our days, especially in men of letters ; they shared the same bed, had one bench between them, one cloak, and so on. Beaumont died in the same year as Shakespeare, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, at the entrance of St. Benedict's Chapel, near the Earl of Middlesex's monument. The position of his grave suggested his introduction into the brilliant galaxy of the greatest of poets by the author of the well-known epitaph :

Renowned Spenser lye a thought more night
To learned Chaucer ; and rare Beaumont lye
A little nearer Spenser ; to make room
For Shakespeare in your threefold fourfold tomb.

In Charnwood, too, lie the ruins of another priory, of Ulverscroft, sequestered in a deep valley, of which we have only the knowledge of its founder, Robert Bossu, or Crook-back, known as the good Earl of Leicester, a great friend to the monks, and founder of religious houses in the twelfth century.

Passing to the south of Charnwood, we come into the land of beans, where a township is known as Barton-in-the-Beans, from having been once surrounded by beanfields. And not far south lies Market Bosworth, a thriving little town, not of much interest in itself, but well known from its connection with the battle-field. Bosworth Field lies to the south-east of the town, adjacent to the canal, and a spring that rises there, from which, according to tradition, King Richard slaked his thirst in the heat and fury of the battle, still bears his name.

Both Richard and Henry seemed to have directed the march of their armies with the main object of meeting each other, and putting their claims to the test of a decisive battle. As far as numbers went, the King had greatly the advantage, and Richmond's force, chiefly Welsh and Bretons, with a sprinkling of adventurous knights from the French Court, could hardly have withstood the shock of the sturdy fighting-men of the land, had these been devoted to the cause or confident in their leaders. And then there were the men of Lancashire, whom Lord Stanley held aloof from the array of either battle ; but Lord Stanley, it was well-known, was pledged to the Earl of Richmond, his son-in-law, and was only kept from joining him openly by consideration for his eldest son, held by Richard as an hostage.

Richmond's march had been plain and straight enough, along old Watling Street from Shrewsbury; while Richard's forces mustered along the still more ancient Fosseway that strikes through the heart of Leicestershire. But Richard, always bold and resolute, had struck across by bye-ways, and over the open country from Leicester, and Richmond faced about to meet him. There was little advantage in position; the ground, level and open, was watered by an insignificant stream, that formed a green swamp to the south of Richard's position.

The night before the battle, the two armies were encamped within sight of each other, and Shakespeare has described the tortured night spent by Richard, and contrasted it with the calm repose of Richmond. Shakespeare's contemporary, Sir John Beaumont, in his poem of Bosworth Field, already alluded to, has made use of the same machinery—the spectres of those whom Richard has slain. But both are agreed as to the gallant front shown by the King when the time came for fighting.

He rides about the ranks, and strives to inspire
Each breast with part of his unwearied fire,

writes Beaumont, while Shakespeare makes Richard exclaim, "A thousand hearts are great within my bosom!" as he rides forward to deliver his spirit-stirring address:

Fight, gentlemen of England! fight, bold yeomen!
Draw, archers, draw your arrows to the head!

The morning of the battle showed gloomy and overcast.

The sun will not be seen to-day;
The sky doth frown and lower upon our army.

But, as the day went on, the sun came out from among the clouds, and cast a lurid glare over the opening of the battle. According to the poem, Brackenbury, the former Lieutenant of the Tower, was sent to Lord Stanley. If he did not join battle instantly, his son should die. To which the earl replied with quite Spartan fortitude:

If with my George's blood he stains his throne,
I thank my God I have more sonnes than one.

But he promises to remain neutral if his son be spared. According to Shakespeare, Richard actually gave the order for George Stanley's death, while Norfolk interposes:

My lord, the enemy is pass'd the marsh;
After the battle let George Stanley die.

And this marsh is described in the poem as passed by Lord Oxford, who led the van of Richmond's army:

A marsh lay betwene, which Oxford leaves
Upon his right hand, and the sunne receives
Behind him with advantage of the place.

The advance of Richmond's van was covered with a cloud of arrows from the bowmen, and Norfolk, whose men suffered heavily from the discharge, advanced in rather scattered order to meet the foe. In the confused encounter that followed, all agree that Richard fought for his crown with all the personal valour of a paladin of old. With kingly rage and scorn, he drove into the ranks of the foe.

And shall this Welshman, with his ragged troupe,
Subdue the Norman and the Saxon line?

But he felt that his men fought faintly. Of all the great nobles of England, only Norfolk and his son were heartily with him. Percy held back, while Stanley lay like a thundercloud on the flank of the King's army, ready to fall upon it at the first repulse. And yet Richard, by his personal prowess alone, almost retrieved the fortunes of the day. He cut his way to where Richmond's standard—royal or rebel, according to the fortunes of the hour—waved in the unbroken centre of his host. Nothing could withstand the terrible sword of the last of the Plantagenets. The bristled boar was at bay, and the attacking hounds were scattered to right and left. Down went Richmond's standard-bearer, cloven to the chin.

With scorn he throws the standard to the ground.

Another stroke might have ended the battle, and altered the destinies of England, in Richmond's death; but the gigantic Sir John Cheney threw himself between, and was brought lifeless to the ground by the King's sword. By this time, however, a fresh, unwearied troop of Stanley's had come to the succour of Richmond, and Richard, driven back in the press from within reach of his enemy, was borne to the ground by the sheer weight of numbers.

Where, trampled down and hewed with many swords,

He softly uttered these his dying words:
"Now strength no longer fortune can withstand,
I perish in the centre of my land."

And thus died, not unworthily, the last of the old race of kings. There fell about four thousand of the vanquished, with the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, Sir Richard Radcliffe, Sir Robert Percy, and Sir Robert Brackenbury. The body of the King, surrounded by dead enemies, was picked up and thrown across a horse, and taken to Leicester, where it was received by the monks of Leicester Abbey, who, mindful of the benefits they had received from the royal line, gave it honourable burial. Of the old abbey of

Leicester hardly a vestige now remains, and the site of the royal burial-place is unknown, as well as the destiny of the King's remains. Christopher Wren related, on the authority of his grandfather, that, at the dissolution of the abbey, the place of King Richard's burial fell into the bounds of a citizen's garden, afterwards purchased by Robert Herrick, Mayor of Leicester, who erected a pillar over it as a monument. Since then the stone coffin, it is said, was dug up and used as a watering-trough before The White Horse Inn. Possibly enough, however, the King's body still rests undisturbed beneath the soil of some garden or back-yard. Wherever the royal tomb may be, that of Cardinal Wolsey is not far distant; for Leicester Abbey, it will be remembered, was the last resting-place of the great cardinal, as he journeyed from York towards the lodging his ungrateful master had prepared for him in the Tower.

At last with easy roads he came to Leicester;
Lodg'd in the abbey; where the reverend abbot
With all his convent honourably received him;
To whom he gave these words: "O, father abbot,
An old man, broken with the storms of state,
Is come to lay his weary bones among ye:
Give him a little earth for charity!"

But even the astute Wolsey could hardly have foreseen for how short a time it would be in the power of the abbot to preserve his tomb from desecration. Wolsey himself was no great friend to the monasteries; his plan was, no doubt, gradually to suppress them, and devote their revenues to educational purposes—a scheme too grand and unselfish for the times. But that it would be possible with a stroke of the pen to subvert the whole of these ancient foundations and appropriate the most of their riches to the pleasures of the king and the greed of his favourites, how little likely all this would have seemed to the eyes of the ruined cardinal!

And now nothing but an old wall remains of Leicester Abbey, while the castle has only a few fragments to show of its former strength. Even so early as the days of Richard the Third, however, the castle was in a state of decay and uninhabitable, the King preferring to sleep, on his way to Bosworth, at the Blue Boar Inn, by the High Cross, rather than in the dismal, dismantled chambers of his royal castle. The old inn survived to well on in the present century—and the old four-post bedstead, in which, according to tradition, Richard slept, is said to be preserved at Rothly Temple.

There is little in the present state of Leicester to remind us of its great antiquity as a principal Roman station on the great Fosseway, except the testimony of Roman coins found in the neighbourhood and preserved in the town museum, and a miliary column—a Roman milestone, in fact—which is satisfactory evidence that here was the station known as *Rata*. The name seems rather to point to a confederacy of villages or townships, and the Saxon name *Ligora Ceaster*, or *Leger Ceaster*, may also be thought to point in the same direction; for pretty certainly it is not *Legeceaster*, or the camp of the legion, as many have thought, as it was never the headquarters of a Roman legion. Anyhow, there is a probability of a continued occupation, perhaps as an industrial settlement, from remote times. The monetarii of Leicester were long famous, and have left in evidence a series of coins, of which collections have been formed, stretching from the days of Athelstane the Saxon to those of Henry Plantagenet.

At the present day Leicester chiefly concerns itself with stockings, and lines of warehouses and factories have obliterated nearly every trace of old Leicester. In this industry Leicester and Nottingham may be called twin cities; and, although separated by a long stretch of breezy wolds, yet everywhere on the way are villages where stockingers may be found, and the noisy creak of the stocking-frame is to be heard. There is a respectable antiquity about this stocking manufacture, which came in from the Low Countries in the time of Elizabeth. Bluff King Hal wore hose of cloth cut and stitched, but the knitted silk stockings were worn during the reign of Queen Bess; but we find it difficult to believe that there was ever a time when the old ladies of the county were entirely ignorant of the use of the knitting-pin. The magnificent Earl of Leicester is described by a chronicler of the period, as appalled all in white, including his stocks of hose-knit silk. Malvolio's yellow stockings, with their admired cross-gartering, will be familiar to all. The silken, luxurious stockings, affected by the gallants of the Court, seem to have been the first manufactured, but the humbler cotton and worsted soon followed.

Other neighbouring towns share the industry with Leicester.

There is Hinckley, for instance, not an uninteresting town, well placed on an

eminence commanding the country round, and said to have been a place of strength once upon a time, with traces of wall and ditch, that seem to have encompassed a larger space than is now occupied by the town. A part of this wall, called the Jewry, suggests the presence of a Jewish colony, and Jews, by the way, were not allowed to settle in Leicester, where Simon de Montfort's charter stipulates that no Jew or Jewess to the end of the world shall inhabit or remain. But what the Jews found to do at Hinckley in the middle ages is not at all clear, unless they used it as a half-way station between London and York, a little retired from the main line of traffic, and yet not far out of the way. Old Isaac of York, and his beautiful daughter Rebecca, may have stopped here on their way home, taking Ashby de la Zouche and its tournament as the next stage of the journey.

As mysterious as the dispersion and settlement of the Jews, is the distribution of the stocking manufacture. Why should it stop short here, and extend itself there? Why should not stockings, for instance, be made as freely in Bedfordshire as in Leicestershire? And why should the stocking-frame die away in Leicestershire itself as you approach Lutterworth, which is a pleasant little agricultural capital, noted as the scene of John Wycliffe's ministry? There still stands the ancient church of which he was the priest, where are shown the reformer's pulpit, his vestment, and the monument which has been erected over his empty tomb. For it will be remembered that Wycliffe's remains were disinterred and burnt for heresy by order of the bishop, and the ashes cast into the neighbouring River Swift.

But the ashes of the reformer thus scattered abroad seemed as seed sown on fruitful ground, for everywhere the new faith sprang up, and the Lollards, with their field-preachers, and fresh enthusiastic flocks of listeners, suggesting the Wesleyan revival of a later age, spread fast and thick over the country. Great nobles, like John of Gaunt, saw their opportunity in the new religious movement, a faction ready-made to their hands, and only waiting for leaders. But the strength of the movement was no doubt in the yeomanry and class of smaller landholders, and in the rising commercial interests of the larger towns. The peasantry and upper classes of Leicestershire, for instance, seem to have been devotedly attached to the ancient

faith, and joined in large numbers that pilgrimage of grace, which, as a protest against the suppression of the religious houses, made the throne of the Tudors totter for a moment.

Another hero of the Reformation and martyr to its cause was of the county, and sprang from its raciest blood. Hugh Latimer, who was born at Thurstaston, some four miles from Leicester, and was fifteen years old when Bosworth Field was fought, lived to preach before King Edward the Sixth, and, in his venerable age, was brought by his brother ecclesiastics to the stake. Latimer, in his sermon before King Edward, gives such a pleasing graphic account of his father, a typical yeoman of those days, that although it has often been quoted, it may be given here in full:

"My father was a yeoman and had no lands of his own; only he had a farm of three or four pounds by the year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half-a-dozen men. He had walks for an hundred sheep; and my mother milked thirty kine. He was able and did find the king a harness with himself and his horse while he came to the place that he should receive the king's wages. I can remember that I buckled his harness when he went to Blackheath field. He kept me to school, or else I had not been able to have preached before the king's majesty now (Edward the Sixth). He married my sisters with five pounds or twenty nobles a piece; so that he brought them up in godliness and fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbours and some alms he gave to the poor; and all this he did of the same farm; where he that now hath it payeth sixteen pounds by the year or more, and is not able to do anything for his prince, for himself, nor for his children, or give a cup of drink to the poor."

SLIPS OF THE TONGUE AND PEN.

"If people only knew beforehand," once observed a profound philosopher, "the ridicule they bring upon themselves by the unreflecting use of their tongue and pen, how many absurdities would have remained unspoken and unwritten!" There is no denying the truth of this remark; but it is far from holding good in every case. Certain of our fellow-creatures, either from habit or from a natural deficiency as regards intelligence, seem to be incapable of reflection. And to say or write invariably

whatever comes uppermost in their minds without the remotest idea of its being amenable to criticism. Examples of this unfortunate infirmity are by no means rare, and have furnished the compilers of "ana" from time immemorial with more or less authentic materials for the amusement of their readers. Many of these, from frequent use, have been worn threadbare; but it is still possible for an industrious gleaner—we hope so, at least—to extract from comparatively neglected sources a few stray "naïvetés," which, if not absolutely new, may perhaps be considered worthy of reproduction.

One of our literary celebrities, happening not long ago to visit a lady of his acquaintance, found her engaged in watching with great interest the freaks of a tame raven hopping about the room. "Come and see my purchase," she said. "I bought him yesterday." "In memory of Edgar Poe?" he asked. "No," she replied; "you'll never guess why." "I give it up." "Well, then, I was told that ravens live three hundred years, so I thought I would buy one, just to satisfy myself whether they did or not."

The following dates from the wars of the League, when a report having spread that the Comte de Soissons had been killed in battle, one of his intimates, anxious for his safety, dispatched a letter to him, of which this is a literal transcript: "They say that you have gained a victory, but that you are dead. Please let me know the exact state of things, for I should be truly sorry if anything had happened to you."

The husband of the celebrated Madame Geoffrin was fond of reading, and often had recourse to an obliging friend, possessor of a well-stocked library. Wishing to peruse a certain book of travels, he borrowed the first volume, and having finished it, took it back to the owner, and asked for the second, which, in a fit of abstraction, he left on the table, carrying away the one he had just returned, and reading it over again without perceiving his error. His wife, seeing him deeply absorbed in the contents, enquired how he liked the work. "It is extremely interesting," he replied; "but it strikes me that the author is rather too apt to repeat himself."

The same Geoffrin, on returning home one night from the theatre, was asked by a lady what piece he had seen. "I really cannot tell you, madame," was his answer:

"I was in such a hurry to secure my place that I never thought of looking at the bill."

After the battle of Austerlitz a grave-digger, engaged in burying the dead, was suddenly interrupted in his work by an exclamation of horror from the officer whose duty it was to superintend the operation, and who indignantly affirmed that one of the bodies just consigned to the earth still breathed. "That shows how little you are in the habit of this sort of thing," coolly retorted the grave-digger; "if you were to pay attention to all they say, there wouldn't be a single dead man among them!"

The inhabitants of a village in the South of France, having decided on the acquisition of a picture for the altar of their church, deputed two of their number to make the necessary arrangements with an eminent painter residing in a neighbouring town. The subject chosen being the martyrdom of St. Sebastian, the artist, after the preliminaries had been settled, enquired whether they wished the saint to be represented alive or dead, a question which somewhat puzzled the envoys, who looked at each other for a few minutes without speaking. At last the brighter of the two, imagining that he had solved the difficulty, opined that he had better be painted alive—"For," he remarked, "if our people would rather have him dead, they can easily kill him at any time."

A peasant, whose father was taken suddenly ill, started off to the curé's house late at night, and remained at the door nearly three hours, knocking every now and then so gently that nobody heard him. When the priest at length came down, "What are you here for?" he asked. "And why did you not knock louder?" "My father was dying when I left him," was the reply, "but I did not like to disturb you." "Then he must be dead by this time," observed the curé, "and it is too late for me to be of any use." "Oh no, monsieur, not at all," eagerly answered his visitor; "my neighbour, Pierrot, promised me faithfully that he would keep him alive until you came."

During a recent discussion on the subject of vaccination, when its supporters and opponents had fairly exhausted their arguments, one of the company, who had not hitherto spoken, volunteered his opinion that far from being a benefit to the human race, the precaution was both dangerous and unnecessary. "I will give you a proof," he said. "The son of a friend of

mine, as healthy a little fellow as you would wish to see, was vaccinated by the advice of an idiotic medical man who attended the family, and what was the consequence? He died two days after the operation had been performed!" Here the speaker paused for a moment, evidently gratified by the impression he had made on his hearers. "Yes, gentlemen," he continued, "the poor lad, who was as active as a squirrel, was in the act of climbing a tree, when, a branch giving way, he lost his hold and was killed by the fall. Don't talk to me of vaccination after that."

French peasants, especially Normans, are the most litigious of men, never so happy as when meditating a lawsuit, and prosecuting it with an amount of energy and dogged perseverance rarely displayed by them in the ordinary occurrences of life. One of these, a native of Coutances, having, as he imagined, just cause of complaint against an equally obstinate neighbour, determined to bring the matter to an issue by consulting an advocate on the subject, and soliciting his opinion as to the probable result of a trial. After hearing the particulars of the case the lawyer shrugged his shoulders, and informed the applicant that he had not the shadow of a chance, and that, if he persisted, he would only lose his time and money; adding that a certain article of the Code Napoleon effectually barred his claim.

"An article!" exclaimed the astounded client. "What does it say?"

"You can judge for yourself when you have read it," said the advocate, handing him the volume in question, and indicating the passage alluded to.

Profiting by an instant when the other's back was turned, the wily Norman quietly tore out the leaf, stuffed it into his pocket, and gave back the book with a hypocritical sigh.

"Well, are you satisfied now?" asked the man of law.

"I suppose I must be," replied the peasant in a melancholy tone, and, taking leave of his counsellor, repaired post-haste to the house of a rival advocate, who, less scrupulous than his colleague, at once undertook the case, which, as might be expected, was finally adjudged against the plaintiff. A few days after the trial, the disconsolate suitor happening to meet the lawyer he had first consulted, "Well," remarked the latter, "you see what you have gained by not believing what I told you."

"I wish I had," was the answer; "but

I never thought I could possibly lose. It's very strange, all the same."

"Strange!" echoed the advocate; "not at all. Did you not yourself read the article that clearly settled the matter?"

"That is precisely what puzzles me," said the Norman; "considering that I lit my pipe with the very page on which that infernal article was printed, how the judges came to get hold of it passes my comprehension altogether."

In the heart of that portion of France once called Provence, is a village known by the name of Les Martigues, the inhabitants of which, generally denominated "Martigaus," have long enjoyed the reputation of being the most idiotic Bœotians on the face of the earth. One of them, chancing to visit the town of Aix on business, beheld there an object hitherto unknown to him in the shape of a pump, the water flowing freely from which struck him with admiration. It must be mentioned that, owing to the chalky soil of the locality, the Martigaus, far from possessing a superfluity of the crystal element, were frequently obliged in seasons of drought to procure a scanty supply from a distant spring; the sight, therefore, of such an apparently inexhaustible abundance of water was a novelty to the visitor, and inspired him with the bright idea of endowing his village with one of these wondrous machines, and of thereby securing for himself a well-merited popularity. With this laudable intent he repaired to the largest iron-foundry in the town, and invested six hundred francs in the purchase of a pump, the maker undertaking to transport it to Les Martigues, and fix it in a suitable place. On his arrival, he found the entire population, old and young, assembled to witness the ceremony; and was conducted to an open space in the centre of the village, selected by the notables as the most convenient spot.

"Here," said his customer, naturally taking upon himself the office of spokesman, "is the place we have chosen."

"Very good," replied the founder, looking round as if in search of something; "but where is the well?"

"The well! If we had one I shouldn't have bought the pump. What can you possibly want a well for?"

"To supply the water, of course."

"What!" cried the exasperated Martigau. "I buy your pump in order to have water, and now I am to find water for the pump! It is a scandalous imposition, and as sure

as I live, I will bring an action against you for cheating me !”

Whether he did bring the action or got his money back is not recorded ; but it appears certain that fresh water is still as great a rarity as ever in the village of Les Martigues.

A museum having been opened to the public in a provincial town, the door-keeper was particularly enjoined to let no one pass without first taking charge of his stick or umbrella. Presently in sauntered an individual, his hands carelessly stuck in his pockets.

“Sticks and umbrellas to be left here,” vociferated Cerberus, suspiciously eyeing the new comer, and effectually barring his progress.

“Can’t you see I have neither !” impatiently exclaimed the latter.

“Then you must go back and get one,” retorted the janitor. “My orders are positive, and I can’t let you in without.”

Shortly after the successful appearance of Henriette Sontag at the Italian Opera in Paris, a group of young fashionables, lounging before Tortoni’s, were in ecstasies about her, one extolling the charm of her voice, and another her beauty. “She is certainly very pretty,” chimed in a third ; “but it is a great pity that one of her eyes is smaller than the other.” “Smaller !” exclaimed the most enthusiastic of the party ; “mon bon, your opera-glass has deceived you. If you had said larger than the other, you would have been nearer the mark.”

Among the visitors to a fine art exhibition were two old ladies fresh from the country, engaged in examining with great interest a statue representing a young Greek, underneath which were inscribed the words “Executed in terra-cotta.”

“Where is Terra Cotta ?” asked the elder of the two, turning to her companion.

“I haven’t the least idea,” replied the other ; “I never heard of the place before.”

“Ah well,” observed the first speaker, “it doesn’t much signify. The poor man who was executed there is not the less to be pitied, wherever it may be.”

A librarian, employed in compiling the catalogue of an extensive collection of theological works, happening to find among them a volume printed in Hebrew characters, which were perfectly unintelligible to him, was at a loss how to class it in his list. After mature consideration, he described it as follows : “Item, a book, the beginning of which is at the end.”

On some one remarking to a lady, the strictness of whose educational system was proverbial, that her children were invariably dull and out of spirits, “You are quite right,” she replied, “and yet I do all I can to cure them of it ; but the more I whip them, the sulkier they look.”

A timid Parisian bourgeois, who had more than once been robbed in that unfrequented quarter of the city bordering the Canal St. Martin, declared that he would not set foot out of doors again after nightfall. “Why don’t you carry a revolver ?” asked a neighbour. “What would be the use of that ?” he said ; “the thieves would be sure to take it from me.”

A lady of mature age, not particularly well favoured by nature, had a mania for private theatricals, especially affecting the parts of youthful heroines. When complimented by a flatterer on her performance of one of these, “You are very good,” she said with a becoming show of modesty ; “but to represent the character properly one ought to be young and pretty.” “Ah, madame,” naively answered her obsequious admirer, “you have just given us a convincing proof of the contrary.”

Similarly partial to amateur acting was a French Countess, who seldom omitted to indulge in her favourite pastime during her annual sojourn in a château near Paris. On one occasion she had invited a number of equally stage-struck guests, and had organised a dramatic entertainment ; the inhabitants of the neighbouring village being admitted as a special favour to witness the performance. When all had passed off satisfactorily, the Countess was informed that a deputation, composed of the leading farmers of the district, solicited the honour of an interview with her and her “society.” Naturally expecting to be complimented on her exertions, and not a little curious to ascertain the popular opinion of her talent, Madame de R— received her visitors most courteously ; but was somewhat surprised on finding that, beyond a great deal of bowing and scraping, not one appeared to have a word to say for himself ; the members of the “deputation” staring first at her and then at each other, evidently at a loss how to begin. At length the hostess, embarrassed in her turn by their prolonged silence, graciously enquired if she could be of any further service to them ; whereupon one of the party summoned up courage enough to say that they had come for their “pourboire.” Doubting whether she had heard aright, she

repeated the question, and was horrified by the same spokesman coolly suggesting that as they had sat out the performance without understanding a syllable of it out of respect for Madame la Comtesse (here the bowing and scraping were renewed), it was only fair that they should be paid for their trouble. How the matter was finally settled has not been handed down to us; but it is probable that the presence of so enlightened an audience was not considered indispensable to the success of any subsequent theatrical representation at the château.

On the restoration of the Bourbons in 1815 so many Royalist emigrants applied for pensions or places under the new government that the ministers, in order to ascertain the justice of their claims, found it expedient to interrogate them closely as to the political principles advocated by them in 1793. A youth, barely twenty years of age, having been presented by a lady to M. de Blacas as a candidate for a vacant post, the first question put to her by the minister was: "What was the political conduct of this young gentleman during the Revolution?"

One of the reigning belles in Paris some years ago was the Princess G——, by birth a Wallachian, whose magnificent eyes were the object of general admiration. Far from being vain of their attractive powers, she invariably maintained that although in France people chose to call them beautiful, yet in her own country, where everyone had equally fine ones, they would not even be noticed. A lady friend of hers, not over-gifted with intelligence, and afflicted with a pair of small and inexpressive eyes, listened attentively to these remarks, and mentally vowed that if ever she married, her husband should be a Wallachian, and nothing else; but where to find one of her own rank in life was for some time no easy matter. As she was rich and independent, candidates for her hand were not wanting: Poles, Greeks, and Russians by scores successively presented themselves, and were summarily dismissed; until at length a suitor of the desired nationality, and a Prince into the bargain, made his appearance, and after a very short courtship carried off his bride, who previous to their union had settled upon him the greater part of her fortune, to his estate in Wallachia. Six or eight months later the Princess G—— received a letter from the self-exiled fair one, couched in the following terms: "I might have spared myself

the misery I have undergone since my unlucky marriage with a semi-barbarian, who is hardly ever sober, and has made away with almost every sou I possessed; for I have not attained my object after all. From what you said, I imagined that the air would do wonders for me; but more than half a year has elapsed since my arrival here, and I can positively assure you that my eyes are not a bit larger than they were before!"

When the academician Baour-Lormian had completed his translation of Tasso's "Gerusalemme," he not a little astonished one of his colleagues who had been commending the fidelity of the version by saying: "Now that I have finished my task, and have plenty of time before me, I intend to set seriously to work and learn Italian!"

"FOR HER, WHEN I AM DEAD."

A STORY.

"I FELT that I must come to you at once with an explanation. I know I might have written, but I am a bad hand at putting things on paper. You ought to have been the first to hear of—of the change in my plans; but I suppose you know it. Those confounded newspapers get hold of everything, somehow, as soon as it happens."

Paul Dorman spoke awkwardly and half apologetically, keeping his eyes fixed on the meerschaum he was trying to rekindle, and away from my face. I smoked on in silence, not helping him by question or comment.

"I never was fit for the work," he went on. "It's completely out of my line, and I should never have undertaken it. You were the right person."

"I don't think that was the general opinion," I said, not bitterly—I was very careful how I spoke on this subject—but as stating a matter of fact.

"No," he agreed with me; "but you were less unfit than I; and, after all, the choice lay between us, you and me. It seems strange now to think that we were all the world to poor old Cyril. Well, I've done my best, as far as it goes, and now I have come to beg you to take up the work where I have left it. You won't refuse me!"

It had never been my way to refuse Paul anything he asked, and still less should I do so now. I might have said of myself, as he had said of my dead cousin,

Cyril Blest, all I had in the world had been Paul and Cyril, and Cyril was dead.

"Still, I owe you an explanation," he went on, his pipe between his teeth, and his face turned to the fire, "and I declare," he broke out suddenly, "there's not a man in London to whom I wouldn't sooner make it, or who wouldn't find it easier to accept it than you, old fellow;" and he flashed one of his old frank, affectionate glances at me while he laughed embarrassedly.

I started. His words fell like a blow on an unhealed bruise. He had touched unawares the one tender, aching spot in my smoke-dried, case-hardened feelings. I was a hard, selfish man of the world in his eyes, and those of society generally; living only to shirk the responsibilities of life, and to secure to myself a share of such of its good things as came in my way, without brain or heart enough to rise to the higher levels of enjoyment, if too calculating and emotionless by nature to sink to the lower. That was Paul Dorman's idea of me, David Gwynne, and he pitied me and loved me nevertheless. Cyril Blest had done me greater justice, but he, too, gently despised my aimless, self-absorbed life, and loved me nevertheless.

We were fast friends, we three, linked by bonds forged in the young days when only such strong glow of sympathy and white-heat of enthusiasm as weld men together can be felt. We were at college together, Cyril and Paul the two most noted men of their day, each in his different line; I, perhaps, the least; and our companionship was a standing marvel even to superficial observers. Cyril was a dry, quiet, pale little man, with a bent head and thoughtful blue eyes under his spectacles, never speaking but when spoken to, and then giving short, concise answers, very much to the point, in a low, unemphatic tone. Paul was a stalwart athlete, full of animal spirits, and rather given to "gush" in his conversation—and gush was less universal in those days than now—a right-minded, kind-hearted, fairly intelligent boy. His hair has grown thin on the temples, and he goes through instead of over a five-barred gate when he comes across one now, but he has hardly outgrown his boyhood yet. I cannot describe myself, and I think Paul or Cyril would have been equally at a loss to do so. Cyril sneered softly at me because I did not read, Paul jeered openly at me because I could not row, run, or play tennis. And yet we were inseparables, and no one guessed how the successes of one or the

other would set my heart leaping and my head swimming with excitement, while the faintest, most measured words of comment were all that would rise to my lips.

There is no need to recall their varied distinctions here. Paul's wife has his by heart. He is the ideal country squire and M.P., with a model estate, Conservative principles, and his first and only love for his wife.

Cyril's career was public property. It was brief and brilliant, and the details are, or were a month ago, in everybody's mouth.

I have never read his great work, and should not understand it if I did. I am content to glory in all I hear of his marvellous talent, patient industry, and inspired insight, and to know that his book will stand as a monument of a life given to a worthy labour, long after I am dead and forgotten.

We never drifted far apart, we three. I, living in the narrow little world we call Society, saw faces come and go; fashions change, bright households disintegrate and vanish, leaving dreary blanks; houses of mourning burst forth into merrymaking for one gay season, and sink into gloom once more; beauties fade, and reputations arise and fall. And I have played my own monotonous little part in the show; but my real life was lived with Cyril in his quaint old country home, unchanged from year to year, except for the gradual deepening and heightening of the drift of papers and proof-sheets, and the lessening of the space accorded to human beings. He would come to me in town sometimes, and establishing himself in a corner of my chambers, work away peacefully, between his visits to the British Museum and his publishers. But he never went to Paul's home; he could find nothing to do there, he said, and preferred that Paul should come to him.

In that quaint old house he died, suddenly and painlessly, without a shadow of warning. There he was found, one grey morning, stark and cold at his desk, the ink dry on the pen in his fingers, the other hand stiffened on the page of a book of reference beside him.

They sent for me as his nearest—in fact, his only relative, and I summoned Paul. His will, dated in the Cambridge days, was found at his solicitor's. In it he shared his property equally between us. That is, a certain sum of money was left to me, and his house, his library, manuscripts, and personal belongings to Paul. I had the

lion's share, and it hurt me that it should be mine.

Also Paul was left executor, and that hurt me too. I know I had made a score of cynical observations on the posthumous nuisances men made of themselves to their friends, by laying burdens of trusteeship and guardianship on them, but that Cyril should have taken me at my word cut me to the heart.

I stood aside, leaving Paul to his duty, and feeling for the first time dropped out of the fellowship. This feeling was intensified before long.

Hardly had the last screw been turned in the coffin-lid before "The Romance of Research: A Memoir of the late Professor Blett, with Diary and Correspondence," was advertised as in preparation, with an utterly unknown name on the title-page. By way of an authoritative check to the publication, Paul, by the advice of the solicitors, and at the urgent request of Cyril's publishers, was induced to announce that he was at work on a Life and Letters from the only authentic materials. The notice served its purpose, the catchpenny publication never appeared, and sooner than I could have believed possible, the first volume of Paul's memoir came out. It was uncommonly well done, so everyone said. I contributed all that was asked of me in the way of correspondence or verification of dates or incidents, and that was all. I had taken for granted that it was on some such quest that Paul presented himself unexpectedly this November evening; and was more than perplexed at his manner and words.

"I am afraid I have not caught your meaning," I answered to the remark previously made. "What have you got to explain? and what am I to do for you?" and I tried to speak as heartily as I could.

"I want you to edit the second volume of that Life," was the unexpected reply; "I cannot!" blurring it out roughly, and looking away from me directly.

"Why not? What is there that you and Martin Jebb can't manage?"

Martin Jebb was Cyril's secretary, a clever young fellow, trustworthy and scrupulous; it had been possible for Paul to leave a large share of the work in his hands; all of it, in fact, dealing with Cyril's special subjects.

Paul answered me with a shake of the head, and sat musing a while. Then he began again:

"It's no use casting about for sentences.

I've got to tell you the story, and put it as I may, it comes to the same thing in the end. After all, what does it matter what you think of me? It's Cyril's interests I've got to look to."

He knocked the ashes out of his pipe, then, deliberately laying it aside, he faced me, leaning forward, his elbows on his knees, his finger-tips lightly joined, his face upraised to mine.

"You know me pretty thoroughly, Gwynne, and whether I'm addicted to give way to whimsies and nervous fancies. Well, just listen to this. You know how we had to go at that memoir at once without much time for reflection or arrangement. 'Give us plenty of personal detail,' that little Jevons, the publisher, said. 'Let us have the man as he lived—his early escapades, his love-affairs, and money matters, and his difficulties with his family, if he had any; that's what the public want, you know. Above all, his opinions of his contemporaries. Then his last illness, and his ideas of what he was going to do if he had lived, and if you see any signs of failing in his late work you might call attention to it.' Upon my soul, Gwynne, I rejoiced in disappointing the little beggar! You are the only representative of Cyril's family. He never had a love-affair or a money trouble. If he had any opinions of his contemporaries he took good care not to leave them written down, and he died, as he had lived, without an audience. His story is the story of his work, and what else there was to tell lay ready to hand. He had a passion for preserving MSS. Every scrap of letter or note he had ever received in his life was carefully stored away in dated parcels with the reply noted down. You remember his great oak-bureau with the four arched openings above the writing-desk? The first two were marked inside, 'Private papers,' the others 'Notes on Books,' with a list of the names of the books. All was arranged in such perfect order that I simply opened parcel after parcel according to date, took what seemed best, and destroyed the remainder—and there was a first volume complete before we realised it, and before I had opened the contents of the second compartment. There was so little to tell—his old schoolmaster gave me a sketch of his early days, and a copy of an uncommonly smart essay for a little chap. Rugby was as quickly disposed of, and the rest of the book is taken up with Cambridge and the first outline of his great

work. 'It's all very unsatisfying,' that little publisher grumbles; 'a one-sided view entirely,' just because I've no record of scandalous doings, not even of scandalous sayings, to throw in for spice. I've done my honest best with it. There seems to me something infinitely touching in the very lack of personal detail—in a life so given up to making clear the path of knowledge for those who follow. I can't put it rightly, but there's even a sort of romance about it, as I see it, making a bridge of oneself for another to cross over by. Perhaps it's worth giving up all that makes the happiness of an ordinary man's life to think of the thousands of generations following whose feet one may have set in the road to Truth. You are laughing, of course!" said Paul, rousing himself from a meditative gaze into the fire. "Don't think I want to put all that sentimental boosh into print. I'm shirking the point as long as I can, you see." He had begun mechanically to refill his pipe, but pushed it from him determinedly. "As soon as I got that first volume off to the printers I set to work on the second, and, you won't believe me, but after three weeks I have not got a single page put together. I can't do it. Don't ask me why, but I can't. I have gone down there day after day, and sat down before that old bureau determined not to rise till I had made a fair beginning, and have found myself vacantly dreaming, pen in hand, hours later, and not a line written. I have unlocked that little door, and taken out parcel after parcel of letters, and been unable to bring myself to untie a string or break a seal. The first day I thought it was some kind of fit, you know," and Paul laughed uneasily; "that the change from fresh air to that close study had upset me; so I let things go for that day, tramped all over the country, and went to bed without supper. Next morning I set to work early, for I wanted to get home to Leslie—she isn't very strong just now, and always frets at the time I spend away from her there—but as soon as I sat down, the recollection of the day before came over me with such a queer, sickening feeling that I fairly jumped up in a panic and departed, telling Jebb that I shouldn't go near him again for a week. One thing after another hindered me—or I let them hinder me—till I got regularly savage with myself, and started off one evening, without telling even Leslie, in a sort of frenzy to get the job done. Jebb was overjoyed to see me, and I set to work

forthwith, sending him to bed. I got the place open, and took out a lot of papers, and was putting my hand in for more, when—I don't care whether you believe me or not—I swear I felt a heavy grasp laid on my arm stopping me. I jerked it away, and tried again, and again the grasp fell on my arm and checked me. It wasn't a nice sensation, I can tell you. I took a turn round the room, stamped about a little, and put my head out of the window, and then went back. As I marched up the room to the old bureau, pretty resolute this time to give way to no more delusions, I saw, as I advanced, the little door swing slowly on its hinges till with a click it closed, and the key fell from the lock. It has a spring catch, and a rather stiff one."

"The draught from the open window," I suggested, but he shook his head impatiently.

"Then what do you suppose it to be?"

"How do I know? It all sounds trivial enough as I hear myself tell it to you, and you have a right to judge as you please. But what I feel is that I've had a hint to leave off."

"What? A cupboard banging, and a touch of cramp! You've worked in that musty, air-tight den till you've got overstrained and nervous."

"I only go down there three days a week."

"Never mind. It has all been a severe and unusual strain on your mind. Why, you've not ground at anything so steadily since Cambridge days, I suppose?"

"Oh, I know it's perfectly easy to account for it, but I can't get over the feeling. I've tried my hardest—though indeed the way in which everything imaginable conspires to stop my getting to work is enough in itself to sicken me of the job; but, never mind that, directly I set to work back comes the dazed, dull feeling again. I can't think of a date, I can't put an intelligible sentence together, and through it all I have a horrible idea that Cyril is there watching me. Whether he is angry or urging me to persist, I cannot make out, but he is there!"

Paul stopped, shuddering. I looked at him with a secret concern. It was a case for a clever physician, I saw. This great, prosperous country squire, with his broad shoulders and happy, open face, whose very presence in sooty London was redolent of open air and fresh pastures, had the nervous system of a sensitive girl, and it had been overwrought. Too much work

of an uncongenial nature under pressure—
anxiety at home, perhaps, if his wife were
ailing—had broken him down.

My duty was clear enough. I had no
wish to wrest from him the labour of love
that had fallen to him. It was he who
prayed to be relieved from it; and I don't
deny that my heart gave a leap, and my
face glowed at the thought that my chance
had come. I knew Cyril a thousand times
better than Paul had done. All that Paul
had said of him I had felt in my heart ever
since I had known him. I could show to
the world that pure, selfless nature with
the divine fire burning high and strong
within, undimmed by shadow of earthly
passion or sordid care. I would give my
life to the work, as he had given his to
others. I would teach the world—Cyril I
knew nothing of his work, but I knew him.

All this flashed through my mind while
Paul sat marvelling at the selfish love of
ease which hindered a ready consent.

"You are the only one he and I have to
turn to," he pleaded deprecatingly; "and
it needn't be much bother to you if you
care to leave more to Martin Jebb than I
have done."

"We must see what the publishers say
first," I answered. "When shall we go and
see them?"

"As early as you please to-morrow," he
replied, with a relieved face. "We are
staying at The Grand; won't you come to
breakfast and see Leslie?"

I demurred. I would be round early, I
told him. I liked well enough being in
Leslie Dorman's company, but for the honey-
moonshine still clinging about the pair to a
certain extent, in spite of their half-dozen
years of married life. Alone with them I
felt, not envious, nor one too many, nor
unsympathetic, but something of all three;
perhaps I was jealous of Paul's devotion.
They seldom were in town together, and
always made a sort of holiday of the event.
When I got to The Grand, as early as I
dared, I found them side by side over a
newspaper, reading the theatrical adver-
tisements like two country cousins.

Leslie is a pretty, slender, dark-eyed
woman, with a charming little air of shy
dignity when left to herself, and a tendency
to nestle under Paul's wing, figuratively
speaking, when he was by. I thought her
looking worn and ill, and noticed how her
eyes grew anxious when Paul mentioned
our errand. Had the same thoughts
crossed her mind, I wondered, as were
in mine, as she thanked me with tremulous

lips, trying hard not to speak too ener-
getically, for inducing him to relinquish his
editorship?

"He has done quite enough for friend-
ship and his own literary reputation, has
he not?" she asked. "He may very well
stop now. How do we know what he
may make of the second volume?" and I
fancied her laugh was forced and unjoyous.

Paul was frankly jubilant. Let him get
this job settled, and he and Leslie would
make a day of it. They had to see about
a new carriage, and look in at the winter
exhibitions, and at all the bonnet-shops in
Regent Street; and off he went, whistling
like a blackbird, to change his coat.

"I hate memoirs!" said Leslie with an
angry flush on her cheek. "I am, oh, so
glad this is to end! Surely the world
knows as much as need be of poor Cyril!"

"Won't you wish me well through my
half of the task? Hasn't Paul told you
that I am to finish the book?"

"You!" cried Leslie.

Only a monosyllable, and yet it spoke
a world of wonder, anger, fear, distinctly
and eloquently. I, of all men—I to usurp
her husband's place! I to lay my irreve-
rent hands on the sacred altar raised to
the loved memory! I read her thoughts
in a flash.

The next instant she was trying with
gentle tact to pass over the subject.

"The world must have its will," she
sighed. "'Break lock and seal, betray
the trust, keep nothing sacred.'"

"Ah," I interrupted, "have you so little
faith in me—or in Cyril?"

Here Paul entered, and we started on
our mission.

I did not leave town at once for Cyril's
home. I let Paul have time to write and
apprise Martin Jebb of the change we had
made; and besides, I wished to clear off
all outstanding business of my own that
might make a future call on my time or
attention. I wished to be free of all per-
sonal claims before I approached my great
work. From the time that it had been
definitely given into my hands I had felt
encompassed and separated from my fellow
men, as if by the solemnity of a sacred
office laid upon me.

A great awe had fallen on my spirit,
a great sense of unworthiness. What was
I, to stand between the living and the
dead, and out of the poverty of my own
gifts to try and interpret the meaning of
such a life as Cyril's? And yet I would
do it, love and faith being my aid.

Martin Jebb regarded me with disfavour, I saw; or at best with a "better-than-nothing" air. He eagerly produced his share of the work, and looked contemptuously at me when I professed my inability to appreciate it.

"Shall you not find it difficult to tell the story of Professor Blest's life and omit all reference to its sole absorbing interest?" he asked.

"Did Mr. Dorman enter fully into these subjects?" was my reply.

"He tried," said Martin Jebb eagerly. "No one knows how hard he worked. Of course I did the best I could to explain everything, but he got it all up in a wonderfully short time."

"Ah, that accounts for many things," I said involuntarily.

"Do you mean in the book—blunders?" faltered poor Jebb.

"The book? No; I haven't seen it." And leaving the poor man in consternation at this admission, I turned away.

The library looked unchanged. A fire blazed on the hearth cheerily, and the writing-table was neatly arranged with fresh materials.

"Mr. Dorman used to go over the papers alone, and when he had made his selection, call for me, and we used to talk them over together, and those we rejected were destroyed at once, when we had made sure that we should not require them again," explained the young secretary.

"A very good plan; but I think I had better begin with that first volume, and study it thoroughly. It may take me all night, so I shall not require your help to-night. As early as you please to-morrow."

Jebb assented willingly, and departed.

I opened the book. It was straightforwardly and modestly written. I seemed to hear Paul's voice in every sentence. I should have felt drawn to the writer if I had known nothing of him. But Cyril—what would anyone learn of him from it? Nothing but the barest, baldest facts of his outer life. A painted semblance, not the living, breathing man.

I rushed through the latter half, and laid it aside. My time had come, and the dead should speak. I could not bear to lose an hour, and placed myself before the great, frowning, old bureau that reached high up the wall, heavy with quaint carving, dim-glimmering in the firelight with brass inlay and mountings.

Paul had given me a small sealed packet of keys, and this I opened. The bureau-

keys were on a labelled ring, five in all. One opened the desk and the drawers beneath it; another the first door of the four compartments above it. This was empty, as I expected. So were a third and fourth, of which the contents—notes for books commenced and finished—had been handed over to Martin Jebb. Of the second there was no key whatever. I tried them all in vain, nor was there another in the parcel that could possibly fit.

I felt unaccountably discouraged and annoyed at this discovery. Then, remembering Paul's frame of mind, I decided that the loss was not wholly inexplicable.

"There must be a locksmith in the village," I reflected; and then, resolved not to wait even for that, I drew out the drawers and lightened the huge construction as much as I could, and dragged it out from the wall.

It was a greater labour than I had guessed, but I contrived to make space enough to squeeze myself in, and then discovered the back was one solid panel, quite immovable by any attempts of mine. I replaced everything, and looked speculatively at the poker; but I shrank from any rough injury as from a sort of sacrilege. Then I tried the division between the compartments, and here chance aided me. There was a false back to them—the old, common, futile substitute for a patent lock and an iron safe—and behind it drawers for money or papers. By pressing a spring, not very difficult to discover, the divisions between each compartment folded down flat, and allowed the back to be drawn forward. I tried it, and succeeded in making the panel between number three and the locked number two give way. It folded down, and the contents lay disclosed.

It was full, heaped to the top with neatly-folded bundles of letters, some of which came toppling down, their support being removed.

I plunged my hand in, and drew forth at random. My fingers touched a parcel that felt somehow distinct from the rest—larger and more loosely put together. But as I grasped it, there fell on the back of my hand a touch—an appealing touch. I knew it—I had felt it before. Not so soft as a woman's, it was delicate, and yet firm, and thrilled me through. I stood irresolute; my forehead grew damp. Then I pulled myself together, and laughed aloud—a harsh, discordant laugh that jarred on my ears and awakened mocking echoes in the gloom of the distant corners.

The touch was withdrawn hastily, and I drew out my prize and threw it on my desk. It had been sealed, but the seals had cracked and given way with the violence of my clutch. It had been loosely put together and pushed to the very back of the compartment. Its enveloping paper was creased, and worn, and split here and there. I could see closely-written sheets of paper and some envelopes with Cyril's name. The hand, the scent that clung about them, struck on my sense with a sudden recognition, and then in one instant I was taken unawares and hurled or dragged by some invisible, intangible force away back to the centre of the room, and held there.

I struggled fiercely, for my temper rose hotly, and I remembered how I had sneered at Paul. I caught sight of myself in the dim old convex mirror—a wild figure with white, set face, one foot planted firmly to resist the force that almost bore me to the ground, one hand raised to ward off—I knew not what. The sight filled me with fresh savage strength and determination. I pressed forward, as in a struggle for life, resistless, remorseless, reckless of what I trampled down before me—and my unseen opponent gave way with sudden yielding, and I fell into my chair spent and breathless as one who has wrestled with a spirit. I gathered the mass of paper up and carried it to a table before the fire where a bright lamp was burning. The change of place seemed to bring safety. I took up the first envelope that came, and drew forth the enclosure. A dark mist seemed to descend and blind my vision for an instant, but in that instant there passed through me an experience that I cannot write here.

I was still David Gwynne, but I was also Cyril Blest—Cyril, dumb, helpless, struggling for power of speech or sign, in mortal agony, and I deaf and blind to his entreaties, while my whole soul was rent by the passion of them.

It passed, and passed before the scrap of paper that had slipped from my fingers had gently fluttered down beside my foot. I stooped and picked it up, and laid it with the rest; then, with averted eyes and unfaltering hand, I dropped the pile into the depths of a glowing cavern of fire, and heaped the fuel high above it. The flames broke out, flickering high in the wide chimney, and light smoke-wreaths came swirling out into the room. They spread, grew dense, and then in their centre seemed

to grow lighter and thinner, changing from dun to rose, and so to a filmy golden mist that floated apart and showed me for one moment Cyril's face—Cyril as I had never seen him, never dared to fancy him; not angry, not grieved, but drawn and disfigured by crushing shame and anguish. The drooping lids lifted themselves languidly, and the eyes raised themselves to mine in mute, hopeless appeal, and then the smoke-wreaths gathered again, and the vision faded, leaving me alone, crying wildly with outstretched arms to Cyril to trust me—that nothing should change me, or shake my faith in him.

A little shower of glowing fragments rained down on the hearth through the black rail of the grate. One, with its little border of fiery sparks, drifted out from the rest, and for one brief second one word started out in vivid clearness. I knew the hand, and the word was "Leslie."

I let Martin Jebb think what he would about the missing keys next day. The village blacksmith did his business easily, and we set to work at ours. Every one knows the result.

"It is sincerely to be regretted," says one leading review, "that the work commenced so well by Mr. Dorman should have been abandoned to another hand. Throughout the whole of Mr. Gwynne's volume we miss the keen sympathy and intelligent appreciation which Mr. Dorman brought to his work and labour of love. Mr. Gwynne's criticisms are ungenial, his admiration perfunctory. He evidently discharges an unwelcome task, of which the reader perhaps wearies no sooner than he does."

Little Mr. Jevons, the publisher, puts it more strongly. He was in a good, honest rage with me, and he let me see it.

"Vapid and sterile, sir—that's what I consider it. 'Mere dry-as-dust gropings,' as poor Carlyle used to say. Ah, he knew what went to a popular biography! He knew how to put in the touch of nature that makes the whole world kin. This is a mistake from beginning to end. A narrow, one-sided view of a life, and all the materials for an abler and more comprehensive study of the late professor, I am given to understand, wantonly destroyed! Sir, I have no hesitation in saying you have been false to your trust, false to the memory of your friend, false to human nature, false to the British public. Good-bay."

"I don't blame you, Gwynne," says Paul; "it was my fault. Poor Cyril trusted to me, not you. You did your best, of course; but—you don't mind my saying it?—I never did think it was in you to see all that poor Cyril really waa."

Leslie alone is silent, and speaks not to me in praise or blame.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXI. OVERTAKEN.

THEO was now perfectly happy. She had been restless and impatient all through the seven hours' journey from Lucerne, where her grandmother had that morning received a note from Gerald, written in the train, and posted on his arrival at Como. Lady Redcliff's kindness had encouraged him to write to her, and he gave her his address both at Como and Milan, where he thought it not unlikely that his travellers might be gone. He ventured to ask her to let him know if she and Miss Meynell came across them anywhere on the Lakes. Lady Redcliff tossed the note to Theo, saying:

"That belongs to you. I think he is rather a presuming fellow. Why should I trouble myself about him or his concerns?"

"I thought you told him to write to you," said Theo very quietly, looking down at the note.

She had never seen his writing before, except in the register of Helen's marriage.

"What an ignorant fool, to think I meant it!" said Lady Redcliff.

All the wild beauty of that day's journey was thrown away on Theo, absorbed so deeply in her own thoughts that her grandmother spoke to her several times without being heard, and at last, with an angry little laugh, rolled up a handkerchief and threw it in her face. Then Theo woke with a start, flushing crimson.

"Yes, of course! I hate people who are in love," said Lady Redcliff. "Their manners are abominable. They are eaten up with selfishness. Now, little donkey, look out of the window; these tunnels are rather curious."

They climbed slowly between the solemn snow mountains, up the valley of the Reuss, green, foaming, rushing down. By the spiral tunnels in the mountain-side they reached Goeschenen, where it was snowing hard, and Lady Redcliff shivered among her furs, and wondered why she

had left England. Then came the twenty minutes in the tunnel, and then the wonderful change from north to south, from snow and cold to sunshine and summer. Here the Ticino foams and splashes along, its bed half choked with stones; the green beauty, the fir-groves of the Reuss valley are left behind, and on each hand rise great, bare mountain-walls, dry and bleached in the sunshine, except where the constant waterfalls come flying down, half blown away in mist long before they reach the river.

Lady Redcliff had determined to stay a night or two at Locarno, and to go on by steamer to Baveno, where she meant to spend the next week or two. While she was talking about rooms to the manager of the hotel, Theo had asked if she might look at his visitors'-book, and there, among the arrivals of the day before, she had seen "Miss A. Fane, C. Litton, W. Warren, England." She followed her grandmother upstairs, smiling to herself. The one thought in her mind was: "How glad he will be!"

But she was not the first, after all, with her discovery, for Combe met her in the gallery. She had half recognised Miss Fane as she passed her on the stairs, and a word to Susanne had made all clear. That poor young lady was travelling with her brother and another gentleman, and the brother was not very kind to her, and she had spent all the morning crying in her room.

Theo did not wait to take her hat off, or to speak to her grandmother, but went downstairs at once in search of Ada.

A very few minutes of talk was enough to make the frightened child as happy as her friend. Gerald had followed her; Miss Meynell had seen him; she had his address, and he would be here very soon; she would take care of Ada till he came.

"But I never thought of your being abroad, too," said Ada, still resting her tired head against the arm that pressed her close, and looking up with a sort of adoration into the sweet face that bent over her. "I wrote to you two days ago in London."

"Did you? I'm so glad," said Theo in a low voice.

Ada did not quite understand her, or the expression of her eyes, which seemed to have a light of triumph in them; but just then she could hardly realise anything but her own safety.

The poor, worried little brain might rest

in peace now; no more plans of escape need be made. Ada's faith in Theo was so perfect that the possibility of Clarence's still carrying her off did not enter her mind at all.

"Come along," said Theo presently. "We will telegraph to Como and Milan, and then you shall come with me to my room."

Sitting in Theo's window opposite the mountains, already beginning to glow with sunset beauty; talking, laughing, asking questions about Gerald; now and then in a silent rapture watching Theo as she wandered about the room, or following with satisfied eyes the slow, solid movements of Combe in her unpacking—the very image of English safety and respectability—Ada was perfectly happy.

Theo herself had a little relapsed into dreaminess. She had, of course, told her grandmother what had happened, and Lady Redcliff had said very crossly:

"Very well, you are a great fool. But I suppose the gods have set their hearts on ruining you, so there's nothing more to be said. I don't mean to take charge of any more girls, I can assure you."

After this she turned on Sparrow, who was doing something wrong as usual, and Theo went away to her new possession. But presently, as Ada sat there in the window, the door between the two rooms was flung open, startling her so much that she sprang to her feet, and Lady Redcliff walked in.

"You seem nervous," she said, nodding at Ada.

"Miss Fane, grandmamma," said Theo.

"Thank you; we don't want an introduction," said Lady Redcliff. "I know your brother; he was good-natured to me on the journey. He has a special devotion to old women, hasn't he?"

"I don't know," said Ada, very much alarmed, for Lady Redcliff's sharp black eyes were looking her through.

"Don't you?" said the old lady. "Well, you are not the least like him. He is a nice brown, like all the Fanes. I suppose you get your colouring from the other side. It's very pretty and picturesque in itself, but I don't like it."

Ada stared in still greater astonishment.

"Don't frighten her," said Theo, smiling.

"I am not frightening her," said Lady Redcliff. "I knew the Fanes before you were born. But as you choose to mix yourself up with her family affairs, I must

know what is going on. Why have you quarrelled with your eldest brother, may I ask, Miss Fane? He is much older than the other, isn't he? and much more fit to take care of you."

"No, he is not fit at all," said Ada, colouring scarlet.

"Why do you ask questions when you know?" said Theo in a low voice.

"I only know what you have told me. Is it all true that she has told me about this persecution?" said Lady Redcliff, much more gently, to Ada.

Combe, at a sign from her mistress, went out of the room.

"Oh yes, it is all true," said Ada with an appealing look at Theo.

"But don't you see," said Lady Redcliff, "that if I take possession of you now—to-night—and keep you under my care till your brother comes, as this creature tells me I ought, I shall be doing what I have no right in the world to do? I shall have a scrimmage with your eldest brother, and the right will be on his side, do you observe. Suppose he wants to carry you off by the first boat to-morrow morning, am I expected to hinder him, pray?"

Ada still looked at Theo, who smiled quietly and said:

"I don't know whether you or I will keep her, grandmamma, but she certainly shall not go."

"Please yourself, as you generally do, but you will make a fine scandal," said Lady Redcliff, and she vanished through the door as quickly as she had appeared.

Clarence Litton came in from his walk, changed his coat for dinner, and went to his sister's door. As he stood there and knocked, Susanne passed, shaking her head and smiling:

"Mademoiselle is not there."

"Where is she, then?" said Clarence very sharply, with a sudden fear that the child might have run away.

"Not far off," said Susanne. "With the demoiselle who arrived this afternoon. Monsieur need not derange himself. She is quite well now; she is going down to dinner."

"What lady arrived this afternoon?" said Clarence with a stern look.

"An English party," said Susanne, shrugging her shoulders. "An old lady, a young lady, and three servants. Acquaintances of mademoiselle, and no doubt of monsieur, too, but I cannot tell their names."

Clarence hesitated a moment, then ran

downstairs, went to the office, and found out what he wanted to know.

He was very much disturbed. Miss Meynell's arrival seemed likely to spoil all his plans. Her sudden appearance was quite as bad as Gerald's, if not worse. He was afraid of her very name; it was only too likely that she knew of that blackest passage in his life—and yet, then, would she still be kind to Ada? Possibly Captain North had not told her: again, Captain North himself might be abroad, might join his cousin at any moment. For every reason, Locarno was not a place to stay in. They must be off the next morning somewhere, no matter where, taking Ada with them. Clarence wished for the hundredth time that he had never brought her away from England.

Mr. Warren laughed when Clarence told him of this new complication. He rather enjoyed his friend's confusion, and professed himself glad that Miss Ada had found somebody to speak to.

Lady Redcliff and her granddaughter came down to dinner, bringing Ada with them, but she left them at the dining-room door and joined her brother, taking her place as usual between him and Mr. Warren. Theo, as she followed her grandmother up the other side of the table, looked at Clarence Litton and made him a slight bow, which he returned gravely. She and Ada were too far apart to speak to each other at dinner, but her eyes were often turned that way; they were full of anger and sympathy as she caught a word now and then of Mr. Warren's jokes, and saw the colour rise in Ada's cheeks at some of his rude, familiar ways and speeches. Clarence Litton bent over his plate with a gloomy face, drank a great deal, and hardly spoke a word; but his friend seemed to be in the highest spirits, specially and unbearably agreeable. Many eyes besides Theo's were turned on Ada with pity and curiosity as his noisy voice went on. Lady Redcliff, among others, often glanced that way with an odd little cat-like grin. Before anyone else had finished, she got up, and went away to the reading-room on her granddaughter's arm.

"Won't the people bore you? Wouldn't you rather go upstairs?" said Theo.

"No; I have a little business to do first—a little game to spoil," said Lady Redcliff. "That is an animal indeed."

"I told you he was quite out of the question," said Theo.

"The other looks presentable, but he has

a bad face, and he is dreadfully afraid of us; he knows very well that we are the avengers," said Lady Redcliff.

"Are you going to speak to him? What shall you say?"

"Leave that to me. Yes, I must have some talk with Mr. Litton, but don't let the other come near me," said Lady Redcliff cheerfully.

Theo looked at her and smiled.

"You will take charge of Ada, then, grandmamma?"

"Nothing of the kind. I should be a kidnapper myself. I shall try to make them stay here till the brother comes, as you were officious enough to telegraph for him. After that I shall have nothing more to do with any of them, nor will you. They are not a respectable set of people."

Theo gave her a curious glance, and then said with a little sigh:

"Here they are."

The three came in from the dining-room together. Mr. Warren went to the other side of the room with a newspaper. Ada crept round to the back of Theo's chair; Clarence, who did not wish to behave like the coward he felt, walked up to the table, and began turning over the leaves of a book.

"Miss Fane," said Lady Redcliff, "I should like to know your brother. Will he come and talk to me?"

Clarence thus found himself suddenly seized upon. He glanced at Theo, but she was not looking at him. A minute later, the people who were coming into the room saw nothing remarkable in the group by the fire: an old lady in an armchair; a tall, well-dressed man standing up and talking to her, apparently on easy and pleasant terms; a young woman, beautiful and silent, sitting a little in the background, sometimes smiling faintly at some touch or word from a fair, pretty girl leaning on the back of her chair. Theo was listening with a kind of spell-bound interest to her grandmother's talk with Clarence Litton. Lady Redcliff could be charming when she chose; she was charming now. The sharp edges of her talk flashed at first without cutting; she chattered to Clarence in such a pleasant way that he was almost thrown off his guard, and did not recognise one of the Fates in this little, dark old woman. But presently he began to listen more gravely, and to remember his position, for Lady Redcliff was telling him of their meeting with his brother Gerald, who was anxious to overtake and join him. This

news made it hard for Clarence to keep up his agreeable indifference.

"Really! You surprise me; I had no idea Gerald was abroad," he said calmly enough. "And where did you meet him?"

"At Dover, and he travelled with us to Baile, where we were sorry to part," said Lady Redcliff. "He ran after you in a great hurry, but he must have missed you, I suppose. There is a likeness between you—more than I should have expected, for he is very like the Fanes, and, of course, you have nothing to do with them. I used to know some of them very well."

"Ah!" said Clarence thoughtfully, after she had gone on for a minute or two. "I wonder where Gerald may be now?"

"He will be here to-morrow," said Lady Redcliff; "at least, I think so, for he seems to be a devoted sort of brother. He asked me to let him know if I came across you anywhere, so I telegraphed to Como and Milan this afternoon."

"Indeed! That was very kind of you," said Clarence.

"You were out, and couldn't be consulted," said Lady Redcliff, "and I thought poor Mr. Fane might go chasing on as far as Florence or Rome. Yes, I felt sure you would all be obliged to me. Your sister quite thought so."

"Oh, certainly," said Clarence. He could not trust himself to look up, so he gazed at the hearthrug, and slowly stroked and pulled his moustache. "He will miss us again, unfortunately," he said. "My friend and I have decided to go on to-morrow morning."

The next moment he called himself a fool for saying this, but it was too late.

"Indeed! Where?" said Lady Redcliff.

"I don't know. We have not decided. But my sister and I are travelling with him, you see—and I don't suppose my brother's coming is certain enough—your kind telegrams might not reach him, after all, and we might be delayed for nothing. We business people have not much time to spare."

"Really! haven't you?" said Lady Redcliff. "Well, I can't exactly propose that we should become one party, for an old woman like me would be a drag upon you, and there are other reasons. But I find your sister does not much care to go on into Italy with you. Suppose you and your friend go off to-morrow, leaving her with me till your brother joins us? Now consider—you will be much more independent without a girl on your hands."

Lady Redcliff flashed a glance round at Theo and Ada, one of whom looked absent and unconscious, while the other was blushing, and trying as well as she could to hide her anxiety and agitation.

"It is very good of you, Lady Redcliff," said Clarence after a pause, "to interest yourself in our concerns, but I am sure my sister would be in your way."

"I will punish you for this little plot, Miss Ada," he thought to himself. "You think you are quite safe, and that I can't refuse, but you will find yourself mistaken."

"We are a party of women already," said Lady Redcliff, not at all choosing to understand his tone. "So that is settled, is it? Don't thank me; I am glad to be of use."

"You will let me thank you for your kind intention," said Clarence coolly. "I do not wish to leave my sister behind, as she knows. It is natural that she should wish to stay with people who are good enough to take an interest in her; but, thank you, it is impossible."

"Oh!" said Lady Redcliff very expressively. "Very well. She must be ready to start to-morrow morning. Is that it?"

Clarence bowed. Then, as Lady Redcliff said no more, he thought the conversation might as well end. He looked across at Ada, who was startled by the angry glance he gave her, but at the same moment he met Theo's eyes full of such scorn that he dropped his own, and walked away. Presently he and Warren went out into the loggia together.

Lady Redcliff remained for a few minutes staring quietly into the fire. Then she turned round, and said in a low voice to Theo:

"Go upstairs now. Take Miss Fane with you, and don't come down again. Send Sparrow to me in half an hour."

It was quite an hour later, and every one else had left the reading-room, when Clarence and Mr. Warren came in again, and found the little old lady sitting alone by the fire.

She had sent Sparrow away, and was waiting for them there, but they did not know that.

"Is it a fine night, Mr. Litton?" she said, without looking up.

Clarence assured her that it was beautiful.

"Miss Fane ought to have been out, enjoying it too," Warren said to him. "Excuse me, Lady Redcliff, but I hear you

wish to deprive our tour of its greatest attraction."

Lady Redcliff lifted her eyes then. They were very bright and cold, and she looked at Warren from head to foot with a sort of diamond hardness. She did not mean to waste her words on a creature of his level, still less, as he had presumed to speak to her. A look was quite enough for him.

"Can I speak to you alone, Mr. Litton?" she said.

"Are you going to the smoking-room? I'll follow you directly," said Clarence to his friend, who grunted, and went out of the room.

"Now, you have put me in a disagreeable position," said Lady Redcliff to Clarence, as he came near to her, and stood in his former place, looking down on the hearthrug.

He could not restrain a slight smile.

"Well, do you know, I might almost say the same," he murmured.

"Very true. I'm glad you feel it," said Lady Redcliff. "We understand each other, then. You might as well have given in quietly before, because you must have seen that I meant to have my own way."

"I really could not——" began Clarence.

"So you said; but, my dear Mr. Litton, the fact of the matter is this: I do not mean your little sister to marry that man. She is a pretty child; she hates him; he is much too old for her, and a horrid, vulgar person besides. You know all that. You are mixed up with him in business—too much for your own good. You say that her refusal will ruin you. That sounds like a pitiful case; but, even if it is true, it is no reason for sacrificing her."

"It is true, I assure you," said Clarence.

"Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Now you are wondering what business this is of mine. Well, I might have been her great-aunt. You don't understand me, and that is nothing to the purpose. But I think you will see daylight if I mention that I am slightly connected with the North family."

Clarence could not exactly blush, but he changed colour in a curious way, and muttered after a moment:

"I knew that Miss Meynell was related to them."

"Very closely indeed; but don't bring

her name in, please. That affair of yours was hushed up at the time; but I know all about it, and I suppose, if I chose to use my information, I might do you a little mischief still, though it is so long ago."

Clarence bent his head.

"And why do you remind me of it now, Lady Redcliff?"

"Because I want to prevent you from carrying your sister off to-morrow."

"I see. But if you know—I wonder that you choose to have anything to do with my sister."

"Her name is not the same as yours," said Lady Redcliff. "There is a black sheep in most families, after all; but he doesn't generally pose as the head of the family, and arrange marriages for his sisters. Now, will you do as I ask you? Will you leave Miss Fane with me till her own brother comes to take charge of her?"

"You are asking me to ruin myself, and him too," said Clarence.

"Come, I dare say you are useful to that friend of yours, and he won't be as bad as his word," said Lady Redcliff good-naturedly. "I am a much more dangerous enemy. When I set about ruining a man, I do it thoroughly. And as for your brother, I don't care if he does lose that work of his. He is made for better things than grubbing in a coal-mine. However, here's my maid," as Sparrow timidly opened the door. "You will let me carry out my little plan, Mr. Litton?"

"As you are so kind," said Clarence.

"That's settled. Good-night," said Lady Redcliff.

She gave him a friendly nod, and went out of the room, leaving him in a state of bewildered defeat.

"Dear me, I do love a rogue!" the old lady said in a clear, loud voice, as the startled Sparrow helped her upstairs.

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A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XLIV. DICK OPENS HIS HEART.

THE reader will have remarked that Mrs. Tuck's version of the letter was inaccurate—of course unintentionally and unconsciously. She repeated its contents as anyone with her prepossessions must have repeated them. Taking it for granted that the references to the forgiveness sought and to the service done were to Archie's desertion and rescue of Anastasia, she spoke as if these were explicitly mentioned in the note—as indeed she thought they were—ninety-nine persons out of every hundred would have thought so, had they read the note, as Mrs. Tuck did, but once, and with but one idea in her head. Therefore, there was not the shadow of a shade of doubt in Ida's mind that the letter—which was certainly in Archie's hand—was a confession of his conduct to Anastasia having been so bad that only a service so great as the saving of her life at the risk of his own could atone for it. That he longed not only to atone for it, but that they should themselves be atoned (in the Shakespearian sense of the word), was plain from the lovers' meeting to which the letter invited Anastasia, and of which Ida herself was a witness.

Of all this Ida had no doubt, and really could have no doubt. If she had herself read the letter she must have doubted that Archie—whatever he was—could have written in such a strain to a girl whose mother's body, reduced almost to ashes, was yet above ground. But Mrs. Tuck, to spare Ida's feelings, had rendered the light tone of the note serious and earnest in her version.

It was then, we say, impossible for Ida,

or anyone in her place, to doubt Archie's monstrous duplicity. This was the man to whom she had shown her whole heart, and the whole history of her heart, whose every beat from childhood up to yesterday had been true to him! Conceive the crushing mortification of this thought to a girl like Ida, whose self-respect verged on the vice of pride. How much more mortifying was the consciousness that she could not, do what she would, root out altogether from her heart this degrading passion.

It was this consciousness, this disgust with herself, more even than her disgust with Archie, which made her, on the morning of their departure for London, be in such feverish haste to send back a letter of his unopened. She was eager to convince rather herself than him, that she had torn him altogether and for ever out of her heart. It was this, too, which made her as anxious now, as before she had been reluctant, to quit The Keep for London, Paris, Rome, Egypt—anywhere that promised distraction from herself. She would fly, as so many have tried to fly, from her own shadow.

However, the suggestion of foreign travel was Dick's. He thought he might marry Ida abroad, not only without delay—which didn't matter so much now—but without fuss, which mattered a great deal.

Fuss of all kinds Dick detested, but the fuss of a wedding, and of his wedding! It was as pleasant to his thoughts as the fuss of a Roman Triumph to the mind of the captive prince doomed to adorn it.

"Everyone should travel," said Dick philosophically, "and everyone who can, should do the whole world. It's our duty to do it while we're in it; once we leave it we shall not again have the chance, I should say."

Then Dick held forth at great length,

and with a kind of languid eloquence which he could command on any subject, upon the proper way to travel—places to see, and seasons to see them; winding up with a pretty sweeping general law that you should go through the world as through a biography, beginning with the infancy of its hero and his cradle in the East, and winding up with his manhood in the West.

Westward the course of Empire takes its way;
The first four acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

In truth, Dick was in great force and spirits, for his aunt had told him before they started that Ida had sent back Archie's letter unopened. Mrs. Tuck listened with admiration, as she always did, to Dick's ready eloquence; but as for his proposal of a harum-scarum scamper after the sun in this fashion, she had too vivid a recollection of knocking about the world in her old campaigning days to entertain it for a moment.

"You don't really expect us to chase the sun farther than London?" she said.

"Where it runs to earth. London's the last cover one would draw for the sun, my dear aunt; and that's why I suggested going to some place where you can see it without looking through a smoked glass at its eclipse. We needn't go out of Europe, if you dislike a long journey," with the air of making a large concession.

"Well, thank you, I don't think I shall," replied his aunt, laughing in a way which convinced Dick that she had not the least intention of going beyond London. Nor had she. Dick and Ida might, if they chose, go will-o'-the-wisp over the globe on their honeymoon, but she had had quite enough of that sort of thing in her time. At the thought of their honeymoon she glanced across at Ida, lying listlessly back in the seat opposite, and the deadness in the girl's face convinced her that her disenchantment with her cousin had brought the wished-for wedding no nearer. If Archie had been torn out of her heart, her heart itself seemed to have been torn up with him—as you wrench up the soil along with a plant which has pierced it with a hundred roots. She looked as though she had, and would have for a long, long time to come, no heart for anyone or anything. Indeed, Mrs. Tuck, from her knowledge of the girl, doubted with good reason if she would ever get quite over so cruel and so crushing a blow

to her pride, her trust, and her love. If she had been like other girls, and could "give sorrow words," it would have been different, but she would brood in silence and alone over a grief which could not speak, and which, like "a creature made fierce by dark keeping," was all the more terrible from never being allowed to see the light.

On their arrival in London, Dick, with an eye still to taking them abroad, carried them off to the Charing Cross Hotel. The more he thought of it, the better he liked the idea of escaping the long-drawn-out horrors of an English wedding. He could "consent to death and conquer agony," but the inhuman shout which would hail the maid who won him was too much. Dick had never seen a wedding in which the bridegroom did not look like the dying gladiator—beaten, and in anguish, but trying to mask his misery with a thin smile, while the bride as invariably looked like "the wretch who won," and the wedding-guests like the inhuman spectators in the circus, making a Roman holiday of a fellow-creature's agony. This part of the penalty, at least, he would escape, if he could contrive that the wedding should take place privately abroad. Besides, if he crossed the water, he would throw off the scent the yelping pack of duns who pursued him.

Thinking these things, Dick attacked his aunt when Ida had retired to her own room.

"You didn't seem to like the idea of going abroad?"

"I didn't like it at all, Dick."

"I can't see——"

"My dear Dick, I'm not going abroad. You can take Ida where you like on your honeymoon."

"But it's the wedding I want to take place abroad somewhere. I think Ida would like the privacy of it."

"But you don't really think, Dick, that Ida would consent to be married in such indecent haste?"

"Indecent!"

"How long has my poor dear husband been gone—to say nothing of this other trouble? You cannot expect her to think of such a thing for months to come. You must wait."

"Oh, I can wait well enough," almost with a sneer; "but you see my creditors won't."

"You'd better tell Ida so," retorted his aunt, indignant at his tone.

Nevertheless, Dick thought the advice good. Accordingly next day he took Ida for a walk in St. James's Park, and spoke very effusively and affectionately of her great generosity towards him; but this generosity forced him to be at least just towards her, and mere justice required that he should explain how broken were the fortunes to which she had consented to link hers. Then Dick confessed that in a weak moment of good-nature he had put his name on the back of a bill for a large sum to oblige a friend, that this friend had written to say there was no hope of his being able to meet it two months hence, when it fell due; and, therefore, Dick at that date would probably be arrested for the debt.

"I have not told my aunt, but I could not keep it from you, Ida."

"But, if it's only money—if you would accept—Mrs. Tuck could arrange it," stumbled Ida, fearful of the offence of a direct offer of money.

"Pray, pray, do not mention it to my aunt. I could hardly bring myself to mention it even to you, Ida. And as for the kind offer which you shrink from making, how much more should I shrink from accepting it! No, no; I have not yet sunk to that. I only told you because I can keep nothing now from you; and because, too, to say the truth, it's so great a relief to have some one to tell my trouble to who shares it by her sympathy."

"But why will you not let me free you from it? If you knew how great the relief would be to me you would do me this kindness."

And, indeed, the relief to Ida of being allowed to compound in this easy way for some part of her overwhelming debt to Dick would have been immense. But Dick's nice sense of honour revolted from such a suggestion.

"Do you think I do not know how generous you are, Ida? But your very generosity should make me strive to be less unworthy of you. Should I be worthy of you if I allowed you in our present relation to each other to do this thing for me? The time will come, dearest, when we shall share together all burdens; but till then I must ask you only for your sympathy. I had no one else to speak to about it, for I could not bring myself to make my aunt miserable with my troubles. You will say nothing of it to her, Ida?"

"But don't you think if you told her——"

"No, no, dearest; not a word to her. A trouble such as this, which she could do nothing to relieve, would make her more unhappy than you could imagine. I must bear it myself, as I brought it upon myself," in a tone of suicidal dejection.

Ida began to think, as Dick intended she should, how terrible must this trouble be which depressed to despair the usually buoyant Dick. How noble to encounter it for a friend's sake, and to conceal it for his aunt's sake! But it was of a piece with all the rest of Dick's magnanimous conduct.

"You're not offended with me, dearest?" murmured Dick, after a pause left for Ida to take in the greatness of this impending trouble. "You're not offended with me, dearest! When we are what we shall be to each other—soon," pausing significantly before and after the word, "there's no burden which I shall not ask you to share with me, and to let me share with you. But, till I have the dear right to call you mine, I must bear my trouble, as I can, alone," very pathetically.

Dick, having thus skilfully, we think, sought to establish in Ida's mind a connection between this dread trouble and their marriage, which alone could deliver him out of it, quitted the subject for the present with the full intention of returning to it again and again, till Ida's generosity reconciled her to the sole mode of escape which he suggested out of the strait.

For the present, however, Dick turned aside to talk about money, and the disproportionate part so mere an accident was allowed to play in our estimates of men and things. Let a man or a woman, he said, become on a sudden rich or poor, we not merely affect to think, we really do think as differently of their moral qualities as though their characters rose or fell with the suddenness and after the measure of their fortunes. Even Dick himself, though his carelessness about money (which with him was rather a vice than a virtue) saved him from weighing a man by his purse, yet even he was influenced against his reason by Ida's sudden changes of fortune—an heiress one day, penniless the next, and the third an heiress again. While she was penniless she seemed so much nearer to him that he felt she might even love him, and he might at last express all his long-pent passion: Now again she was an heiress, and she seemed suddenly, he knew not how, farther off from him. There

were times when he wished her penniless once more. It was selfish of him, he knew, but it was human nature, and he could not help it. Yet, if his poor love remained unaffected by every change in her fortune, how could he imagine that any change of fortune could affect such a heart as hers? This was his reassurance.

Thus Dick, eloquently—Ida mute and troubled, but lost in admiration at such magnanimity.

JOHN WYCLIFFE.

THE present year is the quincentenary of Wycliffe—that is to say, it is five hundred years since he died in his parish of Lutterworth. John of Wycliffe—there are twenty-eight ways of spelling his name, and we elect the above mode—is one of the greatest, and until recent times one of the obscurest names in English history. It has always been clear, however, that he has been one of the greatest contributors to the English language, English freedom, the English Bible, and the religious Reformation of Europe. Wycliffe is no insular name. He connects himself, through his influence over John Huss and Jerome of Prague, with the great religious and political movement abroad which culminated in Luther's work, and in England he is the morning star of the Reformation, the founder of Lollardism, and precursor of Protestantism.

In the King's Library in the British Museum there is, appropriately enough, this year a Wycliffe Exhibition, displaying many of the choicest treasures of the MSS. department. It contains copies of ancient versions of portions of the Scriptures, especially the Psalms and the Gospels which had been translated into English before Wycliffe's time. Sir Thomas More stated that before Wycliffe's date, he had seen entire translations of the Bible, but nothing of the kind has been discovered, and there is no evidence in support of the notion. At the British Museum there are a few superb examples of the Reformer's earlier version, and many more of the later versions. There is one copy which belonged to the Duke of Gloucester, son of Edward the Second, who was put to death in 1397, and another which was found in the library of Henry the Seventh. In addition to the translation of the Bible, which was mainly his work, Wycliffe wrote about a hundred

Latin tracts, and about sixty-five in English, varying in size from mere fly-sheets to treatises of considerable extent. These are fairly represented in the British Museum. It is remarkable that only one MS. of Wycliffe's is known to exist in this country, while there are many at Prague, and a great series of his Latin manuscripts lies untranslated in the Imperial Library of Vienna. Much has been done in England to elucidate Wycliffe's times and writings, especially in his own University of Oxford, where a magnificent facsimile version of his Bible has been published, and where several learned professors have produced valuable work respecting him, but the most adequate and complete account of him is to be found in the writings of Professor Lechler, of Leipsic.

In a whole field of conjecture and hypothesis there are some salient facts which serve to build up some kind of biography. His full name, John de Wycliff, means that he was one John, born in the hamlet of Wye-cliff, or Water-cliff. The cliff overhangs the waters of the Tees near the junction with the Greta. It is only about ten miles from the romantic scenery of Richmond, and its own scenery is hardly less romantic. It is not far from the castles of Barnard and Raby. An original portrait of the Reformer is an heirloom in the rectory of Wye-cliff, and in the church, where many of the family lie buried, a monumental brass recalls the memory of the last member of the family of Wycliffe. No narrative survives to tell us of any visit in after days to the place of his nativity by this John "of that ilk." According to the fashion of that time he proceeded at a very early age to the University of Oxford, then the greatest University of Europe. It is said that Oxford had then thirty thousand students, a statement which sounds like an exaggeration, but an exaggeration that indicates a very large number. Then Oxford would not be so much like the Oxford or Cambridge of to-day as the Scottish Universities, which largely number boys as well as men among the students. If the men came up early, they stopped long. At the present time all University studies are practically complete when a man has passed for his degree of Bachelor of Arts. All such degrees as Master of Arts, or Doctor of Divinity, imply no examination at all. They are simply a matter of paying of fees and of putting on

of hands. In those days the students passed many years in proceeding through various stages of education, and frequently, as wandering pilgrims of knowledge, they passed on from University to University.

Various colleges of Oxford claim Wycliffe as their own. Indeed, this conflict of claims began not many years after Wycliffe's death, and within the last few years the conflict has been revived. Queen's College, Balliol, Merton, Canterbury, now absorbed in Christ Church, are the disputants, and these many claimants suggest the idea that there are probably more Wycliffes than one, and, indeed, modern research has brought to light the existence of another Wycliffe, a worthy, well-intentioned man, no doubt, but who has no claims to history either of making it or being mentioned in it. He has served, however, to confuse the question of colleges.

There seems to be no doubt that our Wycliffe was Master of Balliol, and not much doubt that he became warden of Canterbury Hall. Probably, after his periods of headship had expired, he had hired rooms at Queen's College. He made himself a great power at Oxford, where he became a most profound and renowned professor. One great schoolman had been known as "The Irrefragable;" another as "The Subtle;" another "The Angelical." Wycliffe became known as "The Evangelical." Old Foxe says "that he was famously reputed for a famous divine, a deep schoolman, and no less expert in all kinds of philosophy." Knighton, the historian, and his enemy, says that "his powers of debate were almost more than human." He taught in logic and philosophy, and also lectured in the canon and civil law. He also seems to have taken an active part in the administrative affairs of the University, wherein Wycliffe differed so greatly from his contemporaries that, whereas the so-called theologians of the time occupied themselves with studying Aquinas, and Scotus, and Peter Lombard, the "Master of the Sentences," he gave vigorous lectures on the Bible, which was quite a new thing in Oxford experiences, and not only explained it to his pupils in the week, but preached it to the public on Sundays. He accused the clergy of having banished the Scriptures, and demanded the reinstatement of their authority in the Church. It so happened that at this time the awful pestilence of the Black Death swept over Europe, devastated England, and destroyed one half

of the population. The lands were left untilled, the cattle strayed at their own will through corn-field and pasture; the hearts of all men failed them for terror. This awful visitation intensely affected the mind of Wycliffe, and, perhaps, disposed the minds of many to listen with respect to his earnest and impressive teaching.

The history of the Oxford scholar and divine now connects itself with the general history of the country. At this time England was in the most priest-ridden period of its annals. Wycliffe was called upon to intervene between the crushing tyranny of the papacy and the dawning conscience and liberties of England. Mr. Green, the historian, eloquently says: "As yet, indeed, even Wycliffe himself can hardly have suspected the immense range of his intellectual powers. It was only the struggle that lay before which revealed, in the dry and subtle schoolman"—Mr. Green here inadequately describes the character and work of Wycliffe at this earlier date—"the founder of our later English prose, and master of popular invective, of irony, of persuasion, a dexterous politician, an audacious partisan; the organiser of a religious order, the unsparing assailant of abuses, the boldest and most indefatigable of controversialists; the first Reformer who dared, when deserted and alone, to question and deny the creed of the Christendom around him; to break through the traditions of the past, and with his last breath to assert the freedom of religious thought against the dogmas of the papacy." At this time England seemed handed over to Rome, bound hand and foot. The greed and rapacity of the Pontiff, who then lived at Avignon, and was practically a Frenchman, supporting French interests against England, passed all bounds. The English people scorned a French Pope who was identified with their bitterest enemies. More than one third of the soil, at this time, belonged to the Church. The taxes in England levied by the Pope amounted to five times the taxes levied by the King. The first fruits of all livings were claimed by the Pope, and foreign priests were obtruded into English sees and benefices. The Protest of the Good Parliament declares: "The brokers of the sinful city of Rome promote for money unlearned and unworthy caittifs to benefices of the value of a thousand marks, while the poor and learned hardly obtain one of twenty. So

decays sound learning. The Pope's revenue from England alone is larger than that of any prince in Christendom." At home the mendicant friars had become a kind of "sturdy beggars," and forgetting any high mission which they might once have had, became notorious for greed and self-indulgence. It is remarkable that in the first efforts of the infant literature of England, in Chaucer, and the author of *Piers Plowman*, we have vivid delineations of the abuses in the Church. The English Parliament had prohibited the admission of papal bulls by the Statute of *Præmunire*, and denied the papal claim to dispose of benefices by the Statute of *Provision*. These famous statutes, which became powerful enough at a later date, were at first a comparative failure. In 1366 Urban the Fifth made a monstrous demand that the arrears of tribute promised by King John should be paid him, and summoned Edward to appear before him at Avignon to answer for the long default. The Lords and Commons answered that "neither King John nor any other king could bring his realm and kingdom in any such thralldom and subjection but by common consent of Parliament, the which was not done." Wycliffe in a public disputation at Oxford defended the decision of the Parliament. He appears at this time to have been one of the King's chaplains, and he has given us an account of the speeches of the secular barons on the subject, which is the nearest approach extant to the report of the parliamentary debate.

In 1373 efforts were made by the King to come to terms with the Pope in order to alleviate the heavy burdens on the nation. It was arranged that an embassy from England should meet envoys of the Pope at Bruges, and Dr. John Wycliffe, with five others, were appointed to assist the Bishop of Bangor, who was at the head of the English commission. A visit to Bruges would be a new and wonderful experience to Wycliffe, for Bruges was then the emporium and mart of trades; it was the "city of bridges," and much of the merchandise of the world reposed on its waters; Princes, and merchants rich as Princes, resided in the stately palaces. It so happened that John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the third Edward's son, was there at the time, negotiating terms of peace with the ambassadors of the King of France. Between him and Wycliffe some sort of intimacy sprang up, destined to have important

consequences. John of Gaunt was in favour of measures of ecclesiastical reform which would alleviate the gross abuses of the time. Wycliffe's ideas embraced not only an ecclesiastical reform, but a thorough religious reform; but with these Duke John had little sympathy. Still, the two men had much in common, and John of Gaunt became Wycliffe's avowed friend and supporter. It so happened that neither of them had any success in their respective missions. As a reward for his services, the King gave Wycliffe the prebend of Aust, in the collegiate church of Westbury-on-Trym, close to Bristol, then in the diocese of Worcester. In a garden at Westbury, just below the church, there is a solitary tower covered with ivy, which is all that remains of the ancient castellated monastery. There is a curious entry preserved in the Record Office, that certain men were to appear in court at the "Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord, on the claim of Master John de Wycliffe, clerk, to answer the said John for forcibly taking away his goods and chattels at Aust, value forty pounds." The tradition is nourished that he lodged in an ancient conventual-looking house at the entrance of the village, where it dips from Durdham Down, Clifton.

Wycliffe by this time had made himself obnoxious to the last degree to the ruling ecclesiastical authorities. He had denounced the papacy. He had attacked the mendicant friars. In many respects his public teaching had contradicted the dogmatic system of the Church of Rome. He found himself summoned to appear before Courtney, Archbishop of Canterbury, at St. Paul's. He came, but he did not come alone. He was supported by John of Gaunt and Lord Henry Percy, Lord Marshal of England. When they came to "Our Lady's Chapel in St. Paul," a fierce debate arose whether Wycliffe should have to sit or stand before the Primate. High words were exchanged between the Bishop and the Lord Marshal; something like a general riot ensued, and the whole proceeding proved abortive. Three months later he was summoned to appear before the Pope at Rome, for by this time the Pontiff had got back to Rome from Avignon. The Pope sent no fewer than five bulls, ordering his arrest and imprisonment. The difficulty, however, lay in getting the bulls executed. Wycliffe declared that no man could be excommunicated by the Pope "unless he were first excommunicated by

himself." Wycliffe was again summoned, this time at Lambeth. Articles were exhibited, and he appealed to Scripture—his invariable court of appeal—in defence. But while proceedings were still going on, messengers from Court appeared, forbidding the prelates to proceed any farther. Wycliffe returned to Oxford, to write and to preach once more according to his former wont. At this time, too, the great papal schism occurred. While Urban continued at Rome a majority of cardinals again seceded to Avignon and set up another Pope. This added to the security, which, often threatened, Wycliffe nevertheless enjoyed till the end of his time. He did not fail to attack and dwell on the great schism in which each Pope excommunicated his rival, and pronounced him Antichrist, and, having attacked the papacy, he proceeded to attack the whole Church system, in its then condition, as rotten to the core. He loudly declared against the alienation of English property to the papacy, and argued that though the Church administered its estates they were really the property of the nation, which could reclaim them in case of necessity.

In the midst of his work he was struck down by paralysis. The mendicant friars sent to him four holy doctors, and with them four aldermen, to visit him in his illness, in the hope that they might obtain a recantation of his errors. First of all they saluted him, wished him good health and a recovery from his distemper. Then they pointed out all the injury he had done them by his sermons and writings, and exhorted him, as a true penitent, to bewail and repent of whatsoever things he had said to their disparagement. Wycliffe rallied his energies, called his man to him, and bade him raise him on his pillow. Then he said with a loud voice: "I shall not die, but live, and declare the evil deeds of the friars." His visitors departed in confusion, and he himself made a good recovery.

When the rebellion of Wat Tyler occurred, an attempt was made by his enemies to connect him with the insurrectionists. It is not likely that there is any truth in this idea, if only for the reason that the friars, against whom he exhibited such hostility, were generally considered to be in full sympathy with the popular movement. His enemies succeeded at last in driving him from Oxford. John of Gaunt came down to visit him there, to adjure him to leave out the religious and stick

to the political side of questions. But Wycliffe was not to be moved. Certain propositions were picked out of his writings and condemned by the University. It is said that he was teaching in his lecture-room when the apparitor of the University authorities drove him forth. For fifty years he had done manful work at Oxford, and the place is still eloquent with his memory. And now he retired altogether to Lutterworth, a benefice to which he had been presented by the late King, if, indeed, he could find there a haven of repose.

We will now glance for a few minutes at Lutterworth, where the Reformer passed the last years of his blameless and laborious life. A prebendal stall, and one or two small livings in succession, were all the promotion obtained by the most renowned clergyman of his age. These seem to have been relinquished, and he finally settled entirely in the Leicestershire village. Many are the pilgrimages that have been made there in the present day. Lutterworth is pleasantly situated on the side of a hill, three and a half miles from Ullathorpe station on the Midland Railway, seven miles from Rugby, and thirteen from Leicester. It is a flourishing, old-fashioned, and little known place, and of course very proud of the memory of Wycliffe. It has a few historical curiosities. It has town-hall, market-place, and grammar-school. There has been a great find of Roman coins here. The inhabitants were once obliged to grind all their corn at a particular mill, and bake all their bread at a particular oven, but the case went to the assizes and was decided in the interests of freedom. The place boasted a whipping-post, a cuck-stool, and a parish cage. Scolding women were ducked in the river, in a deep hole below the bridge. There is a romantic story of a murder committed by a miller, and discovered many years afterwards by an accident, when the miller, after twenty years' absence, had returned to Lutterworth. Such are the items of Lutterworth's history, all overshadowed by memorials of the great Reformer.

The church is the very structure in which Wycliffe ministered during nine years, in the last five of which he was constantly resident. It was restored in recent years by Sir Gilbert Scott, who thought that the chancel might have been the work of Wycliffe's time. The tower, and pillars and arches of the nave, are unquestionably much earlier than his date.

There is good reason to believe, from the nature of the carvings, that the pulpit is Wycliffe's own pulpit. An old oak chair, probably of the same date, is called Wycliffe's chair, and is placed on the north side of the altar. There is a mural monument by Westmacott on the chancel-wall in memory of Wycliffe. There is a new font; the old one which Wycliffe used is preserved in the Leicester Museum. One of his vestments is partially preserved; it was gradually diminishing through pious thefts, and is now enclosed in a glass case. A very handsome oak table is preserved, from which the great Reformer used to feed the poor. Two volumes of Wycliffe's Bible are also kept in a glass case, and there is also a fine old black-letter copy of Foxe's Book of Martyrs, with part of the chain attached to it, which was formerly kept chained in church for the perusal of the people, and in this work honest Foxe chronicles the achievements of Wycliffe. When the church was restored, they discovered a priest's doorway, through which Wycliffe must often have passed; a square "aumbry" for sacramental vessels, which he must often have used; and an early English piscina, with a trefoil-headed fenestrelle, containing the usual stone basin, in which Wycliffe's hands must often have been. Outside the doorway there is a carving of the Reformer's head.

The last years of Wycliffe's life in the little village are as crowded with work as any others—incessant and fruitful works. He was a diligent preacher, and an assiduous visitor of the aged, the sick, and the poor. Chaucer's description of the "good persone" is by some supposed to have been meant for Wycliffe, and would certainly suit him very well.

There were two matters especially, which were of the greatest care and moment to him. One of these was the translation of the Bible. As we have seen, there were in existence some translations of detached portions of the Scriptures. There seems to have been no idea whatever of popularising these among the people. They were to be found only in the libraries of the learned and the cabinets of the rich. Wycliffe had the magnificent idea of translating the whole of the Scriptures, and of bringing the whole of the Scriptures within the range of every Englishman. He accordingly persevered with his work of translating the Bible. In those days no one seemed to have the ability or inclination to study the original text, Hebrew and Greek, and

Wycliffe's translation was made from the Vulgate, the famous Latin version of St. Jerome. The whole of the New Testament appears to have been rendered by Wycliffe himself. In other quarters he appears to have received considerable assistance, but the work of his friends was inferior to his own. A translation from a translation must necessarily be imperfect, and before his death Wycliffe was busy with a revision which did not appear till two years after that event. A number of copyists were set to work. At the present time we believe that there are more than one hundred copies of Wycliffe's Bible in existence. His full desire could not be accomplished until it was brought about by the invention of printing. Just as the barons who obtained Magna Charta could not have divined how much of the glory, and liberty, and expansion of England was wrapped up in that great document; so neither could Wycliffe have realised how much he was doing for his country, and for the world, when he formed the great design, so far as he was able, of bringing the Bible within the range of all Englishmen.

Wycliffe showed his great organising genius in the institution of Poor Preachers.

The mendicant friars had been something of the same sort at first, until their work had degenerated into telling idle stories and filling their wallets. Wycliffe anticipated the organisation which John Wesley set afloat in the last century. His poor preachers were at first his own pupils and graduates of Oxford. John Purvey was one of them, who greatly helped him in his translation of the Bible, who brought out the revised edition, and who often preached in Bristol, and other places where the Reformer was known. These men went forth barefooted, staff in hand, "preaching simple Christ to simple men," in Tennyson's phrase. The effect of Wycliffe's Bible and preachers was very great. "If you met two men on the high road," said one of Wycliffe's enemies, "one of them was sure to be a Wycliffite."

In 1382 Wycliffe presented his appeal to King and to Parliament. In the same year he was summoned before Courtney, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, a man who had always been his enemy, to appear before various Bishops and divines at the Dominican monastery in Whitefriars. This is the very spot on which the Times office is now situated. Wycliffe made the fullest exposition of his opinions. He

went not alone into practical abuses, but into doctrinal errors as he considered them. In vain John of Gaunt warned him that, in the latter respect, he was on ground where he could not support him. Wycliffe persevered; there could be no doubt about the courage and earnestness of the man. This Conference is known as the Earthquake Council. While the proceedings were going on, an earthquake, mentioned by contemporary poets and other writers, shook the city, and filled the minds of men with terror. Each party claimed the earthquake as an omen in their favour. Wycliffe said the omen foreboded ill for his opponents, and Archbishop Courtney declared that the earthquake was an emblem of purification from false doctrine.

Wycliffe's enemies so far prevailed that he was completely silenced in Oxford, and for the short remainder of his days he does not seem to have left Lutterworth. His literary activity continued as great as ever, and his followers, loosely known under the general title of Lollards, multiplied in England. His incessant work at last told fatally on his overwrought energies. On the 28th of December, 1384, he was stricken down with a second attack of paralysis, while conducting service in his church at Lutterworth. He remained speechless till his death, which took place on the last day of the old year, and was laid in his own churchyard amid his beloved people.

Wycliffe truly told his followers that times of peril were at hand. The infamous Statute for the burning of heretics was in the future, and to be carried out in the persecution of the Lollards. The logic of martyrdom, of all logic the most illogical, for the most opposite parties have their martyrs, is nevertheless of all logic the most convincing, even winning adherents to the persecuted side. There is one special direction in which the influence of Wycliffe is to be traced with a personal result: the Queen Consort of Richard the Second, Anne of Bohemia, heard of his works and his translation of the four Gospels. Through her and persons connected with her court, the doctrine of the Reformers spread through Bohemia. John Huss and Jerome of Prague, who had actually studied at Oxford, eagerly received them; in fact, the reformation in Eastern Europe was an exact transcript of that which Wycliffe sought to develop in Bohemia. His whole system was, so to speak, imported bodily to the Continent. The safe-conduct of

the Emperor was shamelessly violated; Huss, condemned by the Council of Constance, was burnt alive. The tourist at Constance is still shown the place where he was confined, the ancient building where his sentence was pronounced, and the spot where he was executed. His latest utterances were those of gratitude and adhesion to Wycliffe. The Council of Constance proceeded to wreak vengeance on the dead body of Wycliffe. Having condemned his doctrine, they commanded "his body and bones, if they could be distinguished from those of the faithful, should be disinterred and cast away from the consecrated ground." Thirteen years later a Bishop of Lincoln was found who would execute the Pope's peremptory mandata. Then his bones, calcined by fire, were cast into the little river Swift, which flows rapidly at the base of the hill of Lutterworth. "This brook," says old Fuller in a memorable passage, "will convey his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow sea, and this into the wide ocean. And so the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over." "To Wycliffe," says Professor Burrows, "we owe more than to any one person who can be named, our English language, our English Bible, and our Reformed religion."

A CHINESE COLONEL ON CHINA.

COLONEL TCHENG-KI-TONG — formerly attaché to the Chinese Embassy at Paris — is grieved and scandalised at the wholly wrong view which Western nations take of the life and habits of the Celestials of the Far East. "You Europeans are," he says, "a continent of book-makers, and this accounts for your unfair way of writing. When a man has to fill some three hundred pages, and to sell them, no wonder he goes in for sensation. You err, moreover, through hasty induction. You hear of a case of child-murder, therefore you set down infanticide as an everyday occurrence; you find a lady who cannot walk, therefore you assume that all Chinese ladies are incapable of moving." This habit of attributing to his countrypeople all sorts of ugly peculiarities leads Colonel Tcheng to propose that we found an Academy which shall correct the wrong notions that our travellers have written down about the laws, manners, etc., of foreigners, before it allows their books to be published.

Wicked France readily enables him to point his moral. There, as moralists of all classes are constantly crying out, the Family is becoming of less and less account, whereas in China it is the all in all, the pivot on which everything turns, the centre round which all the national life revolves. The five cardinal virtues (everything in China goes by fives) flow from this source. Indeed, we may mix up any amount of metaphors without exhausting all that the Family is to the people of the Flowery Land. Chang, the model patriarch, is said to have had nine generations living under his roof, and even in these degenerate times one constantly finds three generations, and not rarely four, dwelling together, under the headship of the eldest male—a sight to convince Sir H. Sumner Maine and other expounders of the “joint family” system that this system is by no means confined to Aryans. These Chinese families have all things in common. As Colonel Tcheng puts it, the equality and fraternity which the French talk about they practise. If one falls ill the others help; if one is out of work the rest keep him going till he finds employment. Sometimes they quarrel, for even Chinamen, our Colonel admits, are human; and if there is no chance of making it up, the local mandarin can order the property to be equally divided among all the men. But if he is wise, and they are at all reasonable, a *modus vivendi* is generally found which will still hold them together. “In fact,” he says, “we do in life what you in the West do only after death. Nothing struck me more in your cemeteries than your family graves, and, on enquiry, I found that, as a rule, the people buried in them had not seen anything during life of those among whom it is the right thing to bury them. We, too, have family graves, but their occupants were all their life long drawn together by the closest ties. They do not go down as strangers to what by a fiction is called a family vault.” Every portion of the family property has its own appointed burden. On one field is laid the maintenance of the old men; on another the buying of prizes for the lads who pass good examinations; on a third field are charged the dowries of the marriageable girls; and so on. The five virtues aforesaid—loyalty to the Emperor, respect for parents, union between man and wife, love and helpfulness between brethren, constancy in friendships—all grow out of the Family.

And they not only grow, but thrive. For forty centuries they have been growing, and are so firmly rooted that, to take one instance, if a young fellow gets high honours, the title which goes along with them is awarded, not to him, but to his parents. If a man does you a good turn, your letter of thanks is addressed, not to him, but to the papa who was so happy as to bless his country with such a kind-hearted son. “And as for friendship, you Western people talk of it; we act it out. Live amongst us, and you will see a rich man stop his carriage or litter and walk to meet a poor creature, in coarse straw hat and rough clothes, in whom he has recognised a friend of his boyhood. You have the line laid down for you in your Sermon on the Mount; but I found a good many people in Paris with more than two coats, though there were also a good many with no coat at all. Nay, I found that one Martin, who on a cold night gave half his cloak to a beggar, was made a Saint for so doing. Why, in China a man would do that as a matter of course, and the idea of being made a Saint for it would never come into his head. To you, the exercise of the simplest virtues seems so marvellous that you at once fall to worshipping him or her who succeeds in it.”

Reading all this, and a good deal more, in the Colonel's spirited paper in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, I began to ask myself: “How can there be any beggars in China if everybody is so open to the claims of friendship and kindred?” So I took up a book of unquestionable authority, Archdeacon Moule's *Four Hundred Millions*, with the view of testing the Colonel through one who has had plenty of experience, and who cannot be suspected of misrepresenting the people among whom he is still labouring. Now Mr. Moule has a whole chapter on Chinese beggars. They are an institution. They levy black-mail. Their head man (*kai-tow*) in every city estimates as accurately as an income-tax surveyor the wealth of the different shopkeepers; and, having done this, he goes his rounds, haggles with the tradesmen till they come to terms, and then sticks up in each shop and outside it a green paper and a red one, with his own name, the amount agreed on, the days fixed for payment, and a warning: “The brethren must not come here to disturb or annoy.” If any shopkeeper is so ill-advised as to refuse to come to terms, the crowd of ragged, filthy, brazen-faced, loud-voiced beggars is

let loose on him ; the native police decline to make them "move on," and the poor man soon has to give in, probably paying a good deal more than he would have done at first. A big shop will pay eight thousand cash (thirty shillings) a year ; the chief grocer in Ningpo is said to be rated at as much as thirty-six thousand cash. They do not attack private houses, unless a birth, death, or marriage is going on. Funerals are their special opportunity, for the corpse must be laid in the earth during the lucky hours, and sometimes a crowd of beggars will prevent this unless they are bought off. Archdeacon Moule tells of a Christian burial at which they asked twenty thousand cash, and one of them leapt down into the grave so that the coffin could not be lowered. But Christians, of course, are independent of lucky or unlucky hours ; so the clergyman determined to resist the extortion, and after waiting till late in the day the beggars were glad to compromise for eight hundred cash. Beggars, too, are used as collectors of small debts. When a man will not pay, and it is not worth while "lawing" him, the creditor gives the bill to the beggars, they agreeing to give him a share of what they get ; and, thenceforth, the debtor's life is a burden to him till he has paid in full. But perhaps the Colonel includes the begging brotherhood among his joint-families. They certainly have all things in common, bringing in all their gains to the headman, and from him receiving food when it is too wet or cold to go out professionally. And they have been going on for ages ; King Cophetua's beggar-maid finds her parallel in Miss Yuh Noo, daughter of the beggar-chief Twan Tow (round-head) ; and that was so long ago that some of the literati say she lived under the Northern Song dynasty (A.D. 420—478), while others put her among the Southern Songs (A.D. 960—1320).

And yet, though there is a great deal of charity in China, and some kind of public provision, the beggar class, Archdeacon Moule says, is wretched to a degree. The houses of the working poor in China are almost the ideal of human discomfort ; but they are nothing to the beggar's rest-shed, open to the four winds, with mosquitoes tormenting him in summer, and in winter an old sack for blanket, and the snow for coverlet. No doubt there are Chinese who would rather beg than work ; just as there are Europeans who have the same dislike for manual labour. But

work must be very scarce, and hunger very pressing, before a man will get a beggar-doctor to tie a string round his leg, tightening it day by day, until the lower part mortifies and the fellow is left to walk, like Widdrington, on his stumps. Many sink under the torture of the tedious operation ; and its being in use hardly tallies with Colonel Tcheng's rose-coloured picture of Chinese benevolence. Nor does the fact that, on a bitterly cold day you may see a naked beggar sitting shivering, an old coat with a wisp of straw fastened to it hung on a stick before him, to intimate that he has to sell his only garment to buy food.

But Colonel Tcheng is not content with asserting the superior brotherly kindness of his people, he insists that in all that concerns married life they are better than the Europeans. "Just as you never recognise the family tie till somebody is dead from whom you expect a legacy, so you make marriage a matter of bargain. With us it is a matter of religion. A man marries, or rather his parents choose a wife for him, in order that there may be some one to keep up the family sacrifices. Everybody gets married who has not a special reason for keeping single. With you it is just the reverse, because with you the Family is a nonentity. No one, therefore, marries unless he has a special reason for so doing. And what a hurried affair your marriage is, despite your civil and religious ceremonies ! I think the most reasonable plan would be for you to be married in the train that is to carry you away. Get the priest and the mayor to go to the station, and the friends to assemble on the platform, and then, the moment it is over, off you go, with the scream of the engine for your wedding music." And then he contrasts the Chinese ceremonies—all the presents on both sides ; the betrothal dinners ; the bride's red satin sedan placed on view in the dining-room ; the music and fireworks ; the bridesman with a silver mirror on his breast, bowing thrice, and then lifting the lady from her chair ; the elders on both sides doing the work of mayor and priest, for it is a purely family affair ; the "open house," in which the bride sits in state, behind a table, with a lighted candelabrum on each side of her. After going through all this, he exclaims : "Ceremonial has died out among you. You have a remnant of it in your funerals, but in everything else you have laughed the life out of it." And Chinese husband and

wife get on, he says, so well together. Her husband's honours are reckoned to the wife. "She has the bringing up of the children, and we shall never be civilised enough to desire for them a more perfect education." 'Oh, but in China, woman is a plaything—a doll.' Nonsense! If she has a good husband"—and our Colonel hints that bad husbands are the rare exceptions out there—"she is of all wives the best and happiest. And as for the little feet that you lavish so much foolish pity on—" Well, the Colonel does rather shirk that subject, contenting himself with saying that it is a mistake to suppose that Chinese ladies cannot walk; they can even run; and (which he seems to think more than a compensation) when they go out, walking or in their chairs, they never put on a veil.

That is rather a lame way out of the little foot difficulty; nevertheless, the Colonel's paper is well worth thinking over. We certainly are often too vain-glorious about the far from perfect style in which we fulfil what we recognise as Christian duties; a man who does even a little in that way gets looked on as a nineteenth century saint. And, above all, what the Colonel says about the Family is true for the West as well as for the East. Common purse and fields devoted to special objects are matters of detail; but, weaken that family life which it is the tendency of some of our philosophies to undervalue, and you are weakening the mainstay of our national existence. Apart from the idea of family, a nation is a rope of sand.

But are the Chinese at home quite such a model nation as Colonel Tcheng would have us believe? Let us take the evidence of a Russian, Mr. Piassetsky, who has recently been travelling there, and who saw a good deal behind the scenes, for he was connected with an official "mission" which, quite contrary to Chinese usage, was allowed to run about everywhere, taking measurements, examining public buildings, etc. Everywhere he was struck with the poverty and unhealthiness of the people, and with the brutal way in which the police, told off to protect him while he was sketching, "struck right and left without mercy, quite needlessly, throwing themselves like angry tigers on their compatriots, who grumbled and got angry, but obeyed." He also notes the decayed state of everything, from the Great Wall to the sewers of Peking, which, once a complete system, are now pretty nearly useless for want of repair. He describes a cottage:

"Two nearly naked children lying on the floor ill, a third in the mother's arms; a deformed old grandmother, with a pipe between her teeth. A few bundles of rags, but not a chair or a bed." This is much as the Colonel might describe a lodging in "outcast Paris" or "outcast London"; nor does it seem quite like the Utopia which he describes, where universal mildness and benevolence are the rule, for the soldiers escorting the Russian "mission" to press helpers, when their boat was stuck in the rapids, by dragging bystanders by their pig-tails, and flogging them to make them lend a hand. Of course it is not fair to look at what happened during the horrible famine of eight years ago, when in Shansi alone seven-tenths of the people—nearly five millions—died. We had our own horrors during the Irish famine, and probably the contrast between the luxury in Dublin and the misery at Skibbereen was not greater than that between mandarins and poor in Northern China in 1877; but then we do not put in such a claim for universal benevolence as that which Colonel Tcheng makes on behalf of his compatriots. It is a horrible story, this, of the last Chinese famine; cannibalism in its worst form; no food; the pangs of emptiness assuaged with "stone cakes," made of soft slate—like that of our pencils—powdered and mixed with ground millet husks. A three years' drought had accumulated a vast mass of misery; and, as the famine lasted on through the winter, houses were pulled down and the timber used for fuel, along with the dead trees, killed by the bark being stripped from them, till—except the poisonous kinds—there was not a living tree in the district. "The poor," says the Official Report, "suffered less than the rich. They soon felt the pinch, and sold to their richer neighbours houses, land, etc., at a loss, and then fled while they still had strength; the wealthy, thus enriched, stayed on, hoping rain would come, and in many cases starved to death in the midst of excellent furniture. Children became a drug in the market, and young women were offered for nothing, and even so it was impossible to get anyone to take them. Such women and children as survived seemed at the end of the famine to be in better state than the men." Of course, the Chinese Government did a good deal; but what does Colonel Tcheng say to the chief difficulty having been "the corruption of native agents"? To judge

by what he tells us, Chinese agents should be as incapable of jobbery as Washington himself. As for private subscriptions, China was lamentably in the rear, foreigners in and out of China contributing nearly seventy thousand pounds.

But it is unfair to test the character of a people by the way in which they meet such fearful calamity as that. More to the purpose is it to look at the care usually taken of the poor. Here is the way things go on in San-tung, a creek in Canton, full of boats and crowded on both sides with beggarly tenements: "Every kind of filth from boats and houses is thrown into the water; yet this fluid, too dirty for washing, is daily used for cooking purposes, without being filtered or precipitated with alum, as is done at Shanghai." Such a state of things in the richest city of the empire does not show that marked care for one's neighbour which the Colonel boasts of as a special Chinese characteristic.*

The moral of it all is: We must not put too much faith in a Chinese military gentleman who extols his countrymen at the expense of other nations. In a very polite way, the Colonel is only raising the old cry of "foreign devils"—the euphemism for which is "gentlemen from over sea"—with about as much reason for so doing as a treaty-port mob has when it hustles a white man and calls him names. Reason! Alas, they have sometimes reason enough for doing that! Look at Archdeacon Gray's story of the chairman whom he found crying on the quay at Canton. All day the poor fellow had been wheeling about a heavy British tar, mostly from "public" to "public," and now Jack, drunk and glorious, had knocked him down when he asked to be paid, and was just being rowed off in his ship's boat. Besides, think how America treats the Chinaman, whose patient industry alone made civilisation possible when California began to be colonised. Who washed the San Francisco shirts? Who hawked vegetables? Who supplied the lack of maid-servants when the city was young? And now these helpful citizens are ground

down with poll-tax, never exacted from the white; pure air ordinance, enacting that every living-room must contain so many cubic feet, but never enforced on the American; gambling acts, put in force solely against the countrymen of Ah-Sing; acts against wearing queues, against carrying pails slung on a beam over the shoulder, and many more little worrying enactments. Sometimes the American eagle is not satisfied with such petty work. He screams his battle-cry and there is a riot; the "hoodlums" and other votaries of cheap whisky fall on the unhappy Celestials, beat and slay them, and wreck their houses.

What shall we say then? There are faults and grievances on both sides. If the Chinese at home throw mud—and stones, if they dare—at European visitors, Californians and Australians are cruel and unfair to Chinese—certainly not doing as we, if we were to go and emigrate among Mongolians, would like to be done by. Colonel Tcheng estimates too highly the virtues of his countrymen; but we surely are often too blind to the good qualities of those who have grown up through long ages under conditions so wholly different from ours.

CHARITY VOTING.

AMONGST the many thousand benevolent people who subscribe in singleness of heart to the various noble charitable institutions with which our country abounds, few, probably, are aware what cost and labour are represented by the circulars which they from time to time receive, soliciting their votes on behalf of some particular object of more or less distressing urgency. Possibly the circular may say that this is the fourth or fifth year of endeavour to obtain the election of a son of some poor widow, to an institution established and supported for the purpose of supplying orphans with education and maintenance till they are old enough to make a start in life and fight their own way in the world. Or it may be on behalf of some poor creature stricken with an incurable disease, and rendered utterly unable to support him or herself; or suffering from some ailment, for the treatment of which special institutions exist; or the victim of hopeless idiocy, or any other of the many ills, mental or physical, to which flesh is heir. But all such appeals

* The state of the prisons is a fair test. Dr. Dudgeon says: "Prisoners, let the charge against them be grave or light, or even false, or at all events unproven, are all kept together, eating, sleeping, doing everything in one place. Language fails to describe the horrors of a Chinese prison. It is made specially disgusting to drive the prisoners to extremes. No one can carry in food or money without bribing the porters." Clearly the Chinese want a Howard. Will Colonel Tcheng, who must know all about Howard's work, volunteer for the task?

have a distressing uniformity in the necessitous circumstances of the applicants.

Those who have any knowledge or experience of the blank despair which falls upon the widow suddenly bereft of the means of support, deprived of the light of her life, and left alone with her helpless family of young ones to face the world in the unknown future which lies before her, will be able to appreciate what a desirable prize this election to an orphanage is; what a load of care and anxiety would be lifted from her heart could she but obtain it! She feels sure that if her case were but known in the proper quarter the election of Master Tom, the bright, manly little fellow, would be certain to succeed. But how? What has to be done? What are the steps necessary to be taken to make her case known, in order to secure this desirable object?

She has heard something of them, and her heart sinks within her. Possibly her husband—like herself, well-educated and of refined habits—has been a professional man, or clerk occupying a responsible position, whose income has been absorbed in their modest household expenses, or at any rate, the little they have been able to save has been exhausted by the absolute requirements of his long and painful illness. Her only prospect now, is to turn whatever talents and accomplishments she possesses to future use for the support of herself and children, which will tax to the utmost all the resources she can command. Whatever else she has to do, however, she must find time, and money too, for this. The benefits to be derived are too valuable to be thrown away without an effort. For the future, therefore, till this object is obtained, all her exertions are subordinated to this one all-absorbing purpose.

What, then, is the ordeal through which she has to pass before her child can obtain the hoped-for benefit? If it be intended that the good to be received shall be appreciated in proportion to the labour and difficulty involved in obtaining it, no better means could be adopted for the purpose of enhancing its value; for, not unfrequently, the actual money expended, plus the labour and anxiety, bears a large proportion to the money value of the benefit ultimately received.

The first step is to obtain a list of the subscribers to the institution whose benefits it is sought to obtain; and a formidable list it looks, containing perhaps several thousand names. To each of these

subscribers a circular must be addressed—and this of itself is a heavy labour in addition to the cost of postage and printing—placing the particulars of the case in the strongest possible light, and soliciting votes on the child's behalf. Our typical widow is, of course, quite unknown to all but a handful, and perhaps to all, of this host.

Moreover, hers is but one of many such applications which every subscriber receives, each of which represents a case with special and distressing features, probably equally deserving of attention and relief. And when it is known that for ten vacancies there may be two hundred candidates, one stands appalled at the amount of labour, expense, anxiety and disappointment involved in the contest, and the question irresistibly forces itself upon us, whether it is really necessary and unavoidable that all this should be undergone by not only those who do ultimately derive the coveted benefit, but by all who in dire distress have unsuccessfully sought to obtain what so many thousand persons desire freely to bestow!

As a candidate is seldom known to be successful on the first attempt, the same course of expense and labour has of necessity to be repeated year after year, till either success is achieved or the resources of the applicant are exhausted.

In reference to this matter, one writes: "I have put down the amount spent—twenty-one pounds for one election—as nearly as possible; the loss of time spent over canvassing was very great, and to me was an actual loss in money, as I do a great deal of fancy-work for sale to help to support my children. I think I may say that, at the least, I could have made fifteen pounds more by my work had not my time been so taken up by writing and canvassing."

Another says: "I am certain each election costs nearly thirty pounds. I feel it a very hard case, because my boy is close to thirteen years of age, and if he misses this election—his last chance—I know not what I am to do."

A third says: "This is my third application, and now I am told there is no chance of my boy succeeding, unless several votes are bought, which it is impossible to do, as I have no influential friends."

A fourth writes: "In my case, the expense, time, and disappointment have been most disheartening. I am quite sure, had my case to be decided by the committee, who have a true statement of my present position, family, and income,

my boy would have been at once elected. I have had for three years, twelve thousand circulars. I spent many, many nights—the only time I could spare from my duties—directing and sending out the circulars, but I am sorry to say without much success.”

A fifth says: “I have worked at the papers till I have been giddy and nearly blind, and have had to leave many things undone I should otherwise have had time for.”

Can anything be more condemnatory of the voting system, under which such experiences are not only possible, but are absolute and known consequences, than these distressing but simple narratives in the words of the applicants themselves?

A most striking example of the labour to which candidates are subjected in striving after the benefits of voting charities in the case of institutions other than orphanages, is shown by a notice of election recently issued by the British Home for Incurables, Clapham Rise, of which Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales is patroness. It states that the polling will be at the Cannon Street Hotel, and will be opened at half-past twelve, closing at two o'clock precisely. A donation of five guineas gives one life vote; an annual subscription of one guinea gives two votes at each election, which takes place twice a year.

On the present occasion there are seven persons to be elected to the benefits of the institution, being two more than on the three last occasions, so that the proportion of vacancies to candidates is rather larger than usual, although these latter for this election are one hundred and seventeen, all of whom are eligible. With the notice of the election is a tabulated list of the candidates, giving the name and address of each, with the age, number of applications which already have been made, the number of votes each has polled, and the particulars of qualification of each case.

It is fearful to contemplate the number of occasions on which some have applied, and the amount of suffering which has been endured in the prolonged striving for a boon which in the case of many of them can never come. The candidate who heads the list in alphabetical order has applied eleven times, and polled three hundred and twenty-three votes. There is another who has applied twenty-four times, and polled eight hundred and forty-four votes; while one has actually applied twenty-five times and only obtained eighty-eight votes; and another, with the same number of applications, has obtained

two hundred and forty-three votes. Altogether six have applied twenty times and upwards, and seven have presented themselves between fifteen and twenty times! It is obvious that the bulk of the subscribers can have no knowledge of the individual cases, and it is clear to anyone who carefully reads over the distressing particulars of each case, that other considerations than those of actual need or deserts have determined the number of votes recorded. For instance, one obtains, on the eighth application, one thousand two hundred and fifty-eight votes; no doubt a most deserving case, but to an outsider presenting no special features over the one just following, who has applied fifteen times and obtained two hundred and seventy-eight votes. Or, as in the case of another who has obtained one thousand two hundred and three votes on the fourth application, as compared with one very similar, who, on the eighth application, obtains only seventy-eight votes.

Now, this is no hypothetical case, and is it not fair to take into consideration the proportion the amount of money spent, not only by the one hundred and ten unsuccessful candidates, but by the whole one hundred and seventeen, bears to the money value of the benefit received by the seven successful cases?

Surely there is sufficient here to convince the most sceptical of the unnecessary infliction of an enormous amount of mental suffering and anxiety, and of the grievous wrong which is inflicted on large bodies of applicants who are induced to exhaust their scanty resources in canvassing, a large proportion of whom can never receive any benefit, but wear themselves out in body, purse, and spirit, lured on by the vain hope of a prize in this lottery of charity.

It is painfully beyond dispute, with such discrepancies before one's eyes, that the actual circumstances of the poor candidates are not even thought of, but that success depends, in most cases, upon the possession of money or friends to the exclusion of those who have neither. And, in fact, as the Marquis of Salisbury pithily puts it, “It”—the system of charity voting—“selects the objects of charity in the very worst way, befriending those who have many friends, and sending back those who have few friends, unrelieved.”

It is obvious that the terrible expense, added to the all-absorbing anxiety and exhausting labour, must tell with crushing effect against the candidature of those least

able to bear it—that is, against the most deserving of those for whose benefit charitable institutions are supported. It has, in fact, come to be recognised that, without either money or friends, the most deserving applicants have next to no chance of success, whereas, by a lavish expenditure in canvassing and the purchase of votes, together with the help of certain personal influences, and a skilful management in the exchange of votes, it is quite possible for a wholly undeserving candidate to be successful. This was plainly shown in a case which was tried before Mr. Justice Blackburn and Mr. Justice Quain, arising out of the failure of one of the parties in the transaction to complete a bargain made for the exchange of votes, and it is a painful fact which cannot be too widely known.

As a climax to the labour and anxiety of the canvass comes the public polling-day. On these occasions the scenes exhibited are a positive scandal. It is then when is displayed the skill, amidst all the turmoil and excitement of a popular election, of the pushing, scheming, bustling manipulator who carries on a regular buying and selling of votes. Placards are exhibited setting forth in more or less harrowing terms the case of Thomas Smith, an orphan, of Sarah Grundy, a cripple, or Mary Perkins, an incurable, and soliciting votes on their behalf. Bargains according to the chances of the various candidates are made by their respective partisans for one election against another, or one charity against another. There, amidst an excited crowd, may be seen ladies and gentlemen, subscribers, committeemen, and officers of the institution, candidates and their friends and relatives, eager and clamorous for votes, and at each fresh arrival these poor women crowd around them, holding out their cards with appeals to “spare me one vote,” or “help my orphan child.”

In hard and painful contrast to these is the quiet entry of a man who in his own person fully illustrates the power of the purse in determining the election. He is neither excited nor hurried. His confidential friends, who are conducting the case in which he is interested, know how many votes have been sent in for his candidature to the office of the institution that morning, for the number was posted up. They knew by that time—say half-past one p.m., the poll closing at two—how matters stood, and former experience would tell them the average number of votes which carry an election. The great man

can sign with equal ease a cheque for twenty pounds, forty pounds, or a hundred pounds, and a clerk of the institution is at hand to give a receipt for the same, and the forty, eighty, or one hundred votes available on the spot are secured.

Another phase equally objectionable may be seen in those who are clearly professional dealers, accosting the women thus: “How many votes have you? Yours is a first trial; you cannot have many.” “No; I have only forty-two.” “Well, it is plain you have no chance whatever this time. Give me your forty-two votes, and I will give you an I O U for the same number for next election. Your friends, who have given you their votes now, will doubtless do the same again. My votes will be from my friends, which you will have no chance of getting, except through me.”

The closing scene may be imagined, and if there are thirty or forty winners rendered happy and exulting in their success, while forgetting the means through which that success has been attained, what about the hundreds of unsuccessful candidates left to brood over wasted energy, misspent time, and ill-spended money thrown away? And who are they over whom this triumph has been achieved? They are desolate orphans, the halt, the maimed, the blind, the paralysed, the idiotic, who have been pitted in competition with others similarly suffering. And it is through such an ordeal as this, with their names and distresses paraded and flaunted before the public, that those for whose benefit our great “self-supporting” charities, of which we are so proud, exist, have to pass, in addition to the preliminary labour and expense of the canvass, in order to obtain that which should not cost the recipient a farthing.

From the abovestatements, some idea may be formed of the varied influences which go to decide an election, quite independent of the merits or deserts of any particular candidate; but few, except those who are thoroughly mixed up with such matters, can really comprehend to what a system it has been reduced in the hands of those who make a business of managing such elections.

The I O U system of borrowing is carried on to an enormous extent, and the complication of the system of purchase and exchange is beyond all conception to the uninitiated. But it is plain that, under such circumstances, the weakest, the poorest, and most friendless must inevitably go to the wall.

As to the reality of bartering, what do

our readers think of the following, taken from the exchange column of a ladies' newspaper?

"Six votes for the Licensed Victuallers' Asylum to be given for a lop-eared rabbit, a sealskin jacket, or a black lace flounce."

"Two votes for the Governesses' Asylum required, for which a Persian kitten, or an old oak chest, or some crests and monograms, are offered."

This is sober reality, the transactions are bonâ-fide, and show that the system is so far recognised as not to be confined to private arrangements, or even to the public polling-days.

Seeing how very small is the number of successful candidates in proportion to the whole number who have been engaged in the labour and expense of canvassing, the reflection naturally arises, who has been benefited by all the money which has been spent by the unsuccessful ones? The only answer that can be given is, absolutely no one but the post-office and the printers. As a matter of right, however, money thus spent ought to be debited in the balance-sheets to the cost of management of the various institutions which have permitted and encouraged the expenditure; for the fact is, the annual amount spent by or on behalf of the vast number of candidates continually engaged in canvassing bears a very large proportion to the sums granted in the various forms of relief.

This expenditure, however, is lost sight of, or is altogether unknown to the general public, since it never appears on the accounts of any of the charities. It is, nevertheless, a most important item in the cost at which those charities are administered.

But the waste of money obtained by painful efforts thus fruitlessly spent, and the terrible effects on health and strength, are not the only evils attendant upon charity voting, for the habit of writing begging-letters which it encourages is demoralising in the extreme, and nothing is more calculated to break down every barrier of self-respect and modesty than thus teaching them to parade and trade upon their afflictions.

Mr. Gladstone says: "The system is a nuisance, and, in my opinion, it is an unmitigated nuisance. These votes are a source of annoyance, and must be detrimental to the cause of charity, and to those who allege 'necessity' I can answer the system is a nuisance."

It is defended on the grounds that, were the subscribers deprived of the privilege of voting, subscriptions would fall off, and charities suffer, and also that the interest excited by the canvassing advertises the institutions, and increases their resources. In answer to the latter reason, it may be asked, is it justifiable, under any circumstances, to advertise an institution at the cost of the suffering class for the relief of which it was established? With regard to the loss of subscriptions, this would appear, from the testimony of those institutions which have adopted a different mode of selection, to be altogether a groundless fear; and if, to a small extent, this proved to be true, taking into consideration the large amount annually wasted by the unsuccessful candidates, which would be saved, the actual amount of good done by the institutions would be not less, but more. But, on the other hand, many benevolent people, conscious of the evils of the present system, now withhold their subscriptions from voting charities.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, when preaching on behalf of the "Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy," took credit to that institution that there was "no canvassing, none of that 'working up of a case,' as it is called. Would," he asked, "subscribers fail if they were not indulged with this electioneering in the dark? Let them look at this 'Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy.' All confide in a committee of honourable persons whom the applicants themselves would respect, and to whom they would gladly make known their griefs."

Conscious of the great and serious evils which have grown up round the present system, some of our older institutions have been induced to adopt a healthier mode of appointment to their vacancies, and others which have more recently come into existence have gladly, and, as they say, profitably, adopted a system free from the abuses referred to. Much, however, still remains to be done, and candidates are still to too great an extent exposed to all the chances of the worst of lotteries.

The principal points objected to are—the absence of comparative selection; great disproportion of candidates to vacancies; trafficking in votes; and public polling-days. Various suggestions have been made with the object of eliminating these evils, but it matters little what system is adopted so long as the main purpose is obtained. Only let subscribers and the public thoroughly comprehend what the present system really

is, and its fate is sealed, a remedy will be found.

There should be neither cost nor labour involved in making an application to these societies, and a decision should be given with as little delay as possible. But in any case the public polling-day—that great and crying abuse—should be forthwith abolished; next, canvassing by applicants or their friends in any shape or form should be forbidden. Take, for instance, as an example of a different method, that adopted by the Cripples' Home, Kensington. A committee of selection investigates the different cases with care and pains. Those which on enquiry approve themselves as deserving are entered on the list and admission is afterwards strictly by rotation. No canvassing is permitted. Begging-letters are practically prohibited, because they could avail nothing. The friends are told as nearly as possible when the child will probably be admitted, and there is no room for restlessness or disappointment, and the labour and expense incurred under the other system are saved.

Or, in the case of those institutions where it is not possible altogether to substitute any other system for voting, a committee of selection might be appointed, as in the case of the Royal Medical Benevolent College, for the purpose of investigating the claims of those applicants who have already been admitted by the council as candidates, and from these to recommend to the subscribers for election a list equal in number to the vacancies to be filled up. The votes to be sent to the committee.

If some such mode as either of the above were adopted, great suffering, mental and physical, would be prevented, as well as bitter and prolonged disappointment from the indulgence of groundless hopes, and subscribers would have the satisfaction of feeling that the purpose for which charitable institutions existed had really been attained without cost and without suffering to the objects of the charity.

For the purpose of influencing public opinion towards the achievement of this great end, a society called the "Charity Voting Reform Association," under the presidency of His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, has been some time in existence. It hopes to obtain the desired end by acting in friendly accord with the subscribers and managers of the institutions themselves, and by diffusing information on this important subject. It issues a "White List" containing the names of more

than forty institutions which are free from the evils of the canvassing system, and has received the almost universal support of the press. Its principles have been cordially advocated by the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Marquis of Salisbury, Mr. Gladstone, Sir Charles Trevelyan, Miss Nightingale, Mr. Spurgeon, Lord Derby, and many other eminent public personages. Those, therefore, who are desirous of seeing the institutions in which they are interested freed from the abuses with which in too many instances they are encumbered, should put themselves in communication with the honorary secretary at 30, Charing Cross, S.W.

MANX SMUGGLING.

As late as the commencement of the present century the most remunerative career open to a Manxman was undoubtedly smuggling. It was better than the Bar, far better than the Church, both of which demanded an expensive education, and offered but a meagre reward; while, beyond these, there was nothing else, except fishing and farming, and they could often be combined with it. When it became dangerous, it fell into disrepute; when it became unprofitable, it was abandoned entirely. It is difficult in these days to realise the gigantic scale upon which it was once carried on, but the following fact speaks for itself. During the reign of George the Third, Commissioners were appointed to enquire into the matter, and they estimated the annual loss to the British Crown at three hundred and fifty thousand pounds. This certainly is a huge figure. But even on the supposition that it was merely a rough guess, it is likely to be rather under than over the mark, for negotiations for the sale of the island were then in progress between the Crown and the Duke of Athole. Against it must be set off a sum of ten thousand pounds a year, the value of Manx smugglers and their cargoes seized off the Irish coast. Indeed, there seems to have been a pretty general idea, not altogether unwarranted by facts, that Manxmen spent part of their time in hunting the herring, and the rest in being hunted by revenue-cutters.

The geographical position of the island was one of the chief reasons for this singular state of affairs. Being centrally situated with reference to "the adjacent islands of Great Britain and Ireland," it was an excellent depôt for contraband

goods, which could thence be run across to their ultimate destination at a convenient season. In fact, it was a sort of bonded warehouse; the insular duties being so small, that they may be regarded as payment for storage. British spirits, for example, paid merely a shilling a gallon; tea, sixpence a pound; coffee, fourpence; tobacco, threepence; and salt, which was smuggled in enormous quantities, nothing at all. Still, absurdly low as these duties were, compared with those of the present day, they were often evaded; and in this there was no great difficulty, owing to the nature of the coast being as favourable to the smugglers as it was unfavourable to those ignorant of its peculiarities.

Range after range of high black headlands rising sheer out of the sea to confront the powerful currents that chafe around their base incessantly; innumerable caves peeping with innocent, half-closed eyes from behind the swirling eddies and bristling crags, yet expanding marvellously on closer acquaintance; long, dark reefs, here thrusting a row of jagged edges above the water, and there lurking below the surface with a grim, patient look, significant of triumph eventually; wild glens turning and twisting among the hills, and at length losing themselves in trackless stretches of moorland where gorse, and heather, and boulder are mingled together in picturesque confusion, and where a carpet of velvety turf often conceals a dangerous chasm beneath—these are but a few of the natural advantages that the island offered to smuggling. What little was wanting, art soon stepped in to supply. Isolated farmhouses, barns, inns, and even cottages, served as capital store-houses, not likely to be tampered with by the insular excise officers, whose business was with the coast, and many of these buildings were provided with cellars stretching far away underground. Their use has gone, but some still remain. You may occasionally come across them in out-of-the-way spots; the road returns a hollow ring to a stamp of the foot, and the sound calls up many a romantic episode of an almost forgotten past. In conveying the goods across country, an old smuggler once told me, the cart-wheels and horses' feet were invariably muffled with crape, and the men were silent until the town had been left behind. It must have been a weird spectacle, this procession of phantom carts, with their shadowy riders, gliding noiselessly along the dark, deserted street, while

the moon was in hiding, or not yet risen. What a crop of ghost stories could have sprung from a single night's sowing! Once in the open country the merry smugglers could laugh and sing to their hearts' desire. There was no one to interfere with them; most were in league with them. Rural policemen did not exist in the island; smuggling apart, they were unnecessary.

In consequence of the report laid before Parliament by the Commissioners, certain restrictions were imposed upon the insular traffic, the Lord of Man perforce consenting. The importation of British spirits was limited to forty thousand gallons; tea, twenty thousand pounds; coffee, five thousand pounds; and tobacco, forty thousand pounds. The exportation of these articles, and also of salt, was altogether prohibited. More absurd regulations could hardly be imagined. A vessel loaded with a mixed cargo could bring what she liked to the island, and as for getting the goods away again, she had merely to wait for a dark night. The insular revenue-officers were few and far between, and by the Hovering Acts the English authorities could not touch her within nine miles of the shore. In order to secure a coign of vantage, the latter had agents in the island, some of them trustworthy enough, no doubt, but others in the pay of the smugglers; so that when anything important was about to take place, the Government cutter was easily dispatched on a wild-goose chase down channel.

Allusion has just been made to the Hovering Acts, which placed the limit of the Lord of Man's jurisdiction at three leagues from the shore, the imaginary line being called "the piles." Of the working of these laws Waldron, who was one of the above-mentioned agents to the British Crown, gives an amusing illustration. In describing the town of Douglas early in the eighteenth century, he says: It "is full of very rich and eminent dealers. The reason of which is plain; the harbour of it being the most frequented of any in the Island, Dutch, Irish, and East India vessels, there is the utmost opportunity for carrying on the smuggling trade. So much, it must be confess'd, do some men prefer their gain to their safety, that they will venture it anywhere, but in this place there is little danger in infringing on the rights of the Crown. And here I must inform my reader that tho' his most excellent Majesty of Great Britain is master of the seas, yet the Lord of Man has the

jurisdiction of so much round the Island, that a master of a ship has no more to do than to watch his opportunity of coming within the piles, and he is secure from any danger from the king's officers. I myself had once notice of a stately pirate that was steering her course into this harbour, and would have boarded her before she got within the piles, but for want of being able to get sufficient help, could not execute my design. Her cargo was indigo, mastic, raisins of the sun, and other very rich goods, which I had the mortification to see sold to the traders of Douglas without the least duty paid to his Majesty. The same ship was taken afterwards near the coast, by the information I sent of it to the Commissioners of the Customs."

The fact that Waldron was unable "to get sufficient help" on this occasion, and probably on many others, is readily explained. Nearly everybody in the island was engaged in smuggling, some providing the capital, the others doing the work, which was just sufficiently spiced with adventure to make it fascinating, and the few who had no share in the contraband trade, like Nellie Cook, "looked askew." A highly immoral state of society, it may be said. But, according to Chief Justice Blundell, the Isle of Man was "no parcel of the realm of England," so Manxmen were only doing what many statesmen of the present day would not shrink from—dishing a foreign Government. Nor had they any great cause for friendly feelings towards their neighbours. From time immemorial the island had been ravaged by Danes, and Celts, and Norsemen, swarming around the coasts as regularly as the herrings; then came the hated Redahanks, as the Scotch were called; and lastly a crowd of skirmishers fleeing from justice in England, and swindling the simple natives to such an extent that the national character gradually underwent a complete change. It was only natural that they should cherish a wish for revenge, and if that revenge was profitable, so much the better. Robbed for generation after generation, they had grown shrewd, cautious, and suspicious; but living among such wild scenery, with the restless sea ever fretting around their rock-girt coast, it was impossible for them to lose entirely their hardy courage and love of adventure. And for these smuggling offered a splendid outlet, of which they availed themselves eagerly.

It must be admitted, however, that the

foregoing reasons—geographical and topographical advantages, high remuneration with little risk, and an adventurous spirit coupled with a wish for revenge—are in themselves insufficient to explain the remarkable phenomenon of a whole nation's abandoning its ordinary pursuits to engage in contraband traffic. What, then, was the other reason? Bearing directly upon a question that is now agitating the British public, the answer is not without importance. It is this—the unsatisfactory condition of the Manx land laws. A brief glance will put the matter beyond dispute.

In 1076, Goddard Crovan, son of Olave the Black of Iceland, conquered the island and divided the southern part between such of his forces as chose to remain with him. This done, he granted "the Northern division to the original inhabitants, but upon condition that no man for ever should claim any inheritance." The whole island, therefore, became the demesne of the Crown. But Sacheverell, writing in 1698, adds: "It is more than probable that Goddard Crovan (notwithstanding his covenant upon his conquest) had given them some sort of fixed tenure, but upon the reduction of the island by Alexander, King of Scotland, it is likely it fell upon the Scotch bottom, where the grand charter only is fixed, the rest loose and uncertain, by which means the country was laid waste, the soil impoverished, while it was nobody's interest to improve it." In 1417, Sir John Stanley, King and Lord of Man, altered all this. "Considering that nothing tends more to the improvement of a country than a just and secure tenure," he appointed "commissioners with instructions to settle the people." This they did by enacting that tenants should have "their names entered in the court rolls after the manner of English copyhold, and the occupancy given them by the delivery of a straw," and also that the lands should in future descend to the next of kin. This was a step in the right direction. "By degrees they came to be reputed customary tenants, and paid only a small gratuity;" buildings grew up in all directions, the lands were better tilled, the people comfortable—a new era had commenced. It was brought to an end by James, Seventh Earl of Derby, who had the hardihood to declare that the covenant of Goddard Crovan, made six centuries before, still held good. In fact, he claimed proprietary rights over the whole island. Here was a case for the Statute of Limi-

tations, if ever there was one. In their emergency the foolish Manxmen agreed to a compromise, instead of appealing unto Cæsar as they undoubtedly should have done; they gave up their lands on condition that they should receive them back for three lives, so that their great-grandchildren and subsequent descendants became mere tenants-at-will. Through the unwearied exertions of Bishop Wilson, this monstrous compact was eventually annulled. But in the meantime building ceased, repairs were unheard of, the ground was exhausted as rapidly as possible, and then followed a period of untilled farms, ruined houses, and general desolation. The land was deserted for the sea—Manxmen rushed in a body into smuggling.

Of course, they were unable to supply all the capital requisite for carrying on the contraband trade on a scale so extensive that the mere evasion of duty cost the English Government three hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year. The value of these goods must have been several millions at least, quite beyond the purchasing power of the insular purse, and bills of exchange or credit must be reckoned as out of the question. The matter was arranged in a much simpler way; many of the large business firms abroad had duly accredited agents in the island. Thurot, for example, was some time stationed there in the service of a Welsh smuggler. The occupation just suited his daring nature, and it was while thus engaged that he acquired the intimate knowledge of the British shores that proved so serviceable to him afterwards. By a curious coincidence, the naval action between his fleet and Captain Elliot's, in which he met defeat and death at one and the same time, occurred off the west coast of the Isle of Man.

At last the English Government awoke to the fact that smuggling could be suppressed only by the purchase of the island. For a long time the Duke—or rather several Dukes—of Athole held out against any arrangement, but eventually he was obliged to give way. In 1765, the Act of Revestment was passed, by which he surrendered some of his rights in return for seventy thousand pounds; and, after many years of haggling, he received in 1829 four hundred and sixteen thousand pounds for the remainder. It was in every way an excellent bargain for the Crown. Judged by the statement of the Commissioners, the gain in duties alone must have covered the whole amount in less than two years.

while the surplus revenue of the island from 1829 until the present time may be estimated at about a million sterling. What, it may be asked, have the English Government done in return for this handsome income? Nothing; absolutely nothing, except to pocket the money. And they are not likely to do anything more, unless Manxmen get up a revolution, or something of the sort.

The sale of the island was naturally most odious to the inhabitants, for they were deprived of their occupation without any chance of compensation. They expressed their opinions in a variety of ways. Here is one of them, written about the end of the last century:

The babes unborn will rue the day
That the Isle of Man was sold away,
For there's ne'er an old wife that loves a dram
But what will lament for the Isle of Man.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRIOR.

CHAPTER XXII. THE MADONNA DEL SASSO.

LATE in the afternoon of the next day, Gerald Fane was walking away from the Grand Hotel up the hill behind the town. He had arrived by the boat not an hour before, and the first person he met on landing was Mr. Warren, who was himself going on board, and who looked sulky and savage to the last degree.

There was no time for any talk with Warren, but he met Gerald with something between a rude laugh and a snarl.

"Here you are," he said, "coming to look after your sister—and somebody else too, I suspect. Well, I wish her joy, and you too."

"What do you mean, Mr. Warren?" said Gerald angrily.

"Ah, you are a fine fellow," said Warren. "Everything your own way now. Your brother is up there at the hotel, looking out for you. He will tell you what nice little arrangements we have made—all for your comfort."

"Look here, Mr. Warren," said Gerald, "I shall have nothing more to do with you."

"No, that you certainly won't," said Warren, and he left him, and pushed his way on board.

At the hotel Gerald went to his brother's room, and found him packing his things in a great hurry. Clarence was at first inclined to jeer, like Warren, but Gerald's real hearty anger and disgust presently made him serious. He told him that he was going off to England at once; that Warren was furious with him, as well as with

Gerald ; but that he meant to make up the quarrel if he could. As for Gerald, he must look for no more help from either of them ; he must find work for himself now, for Warren could not bear to hear his name. As for Ada, she had made her choice, and she must abide by it ; from this day she belonged to Gerald, and they must struggle on as they could together. Clarence used a great many hard words in telling Gerald what he thought of him, Gerald defended himself indignantly, and the brothers parted at last in great anger. Clarence hurried away to his train, and Gerald, finding that Ada was not in the house, went out for a walk to cool himself and think things over.

His position was not at all a pleasant one. Here he was at five-and-twenty, thrown out of the work which had given him enough to live on during the last few years. Of course he had saved nothing ; and out of that poor pay he had lost money every year, more or less, in bets and speculations under Clarence's encouragement. Yet it seemed to him that he had been leading a stern, hard life, denying himself all the amusements that a young fellow of his age might expect. What was the use ? He was as poor now as when he left the army, after those two years in which horses, and generosity, and extravagance of every kind had run away with all his money. And now there was Ada to be provided for, as well as himself. He had considered that question in the autumn, when Clarence had proposed his odious plan. Then a respite of a few months had been given him. Now the question lay before him again, and must be answered.

And there was another complication ; or rather there was the new atmosphere, in which he had consciously lived for a few months now. He was very deeply in love with Theo Meynell ; and since their journey together, since that parting at Basle with the noise of the Rhine in their ears, when he had dared to show her what he felt, this love would not listen to reason any more. Of course it was madness for him to think of marrying at all ; it was the very madness of ambition for him, in his hopeless poverty and want of everything, to dream of asking a woman like Theo to marry him. How could he do it ? It was impossible ; and yet it might be equally impossible not to do it, for the Fanes were by no means a patient race. Lady Redcliff could have told him that her Charles Fane had not scrupled to make

violent love to her, a dark, sparkling fairy of a girl, when he was almost as poor as Gerald was now. But she had a father to take care of her, and to treat the affair as the absurdity it was ; so Charles Fane went off to die in Africa, and his love, a few years later, made no objection to being married to Lord Redcliff.

This old story was of course nothing to Gerald. As he turned from the road into a steep, stony lane that led up into the hills, and gave a few small coins to a blind beggar who was sitting under a picture of Our Lady on the wall, he was trying, without any success, to be sorry for that sudden foolishness at Basle. He did not think she was angry with him ; he had a suspicion, which made the thought of her both more sad and more sweet, that as she was certainly his first love, so he perhaps was hers ; that no one had ever before brought the light into her eyes that he had seen there when sometimes, after a moment, she used to look away from him. But all that did not alter the fact that the thing was hopeless, impossible ; he had been very wrong and very foolish that evening at Basle. Yet he could not be sorry that he had kissed her hands once, if he was never to be so near her again.

He climbed slowly up the steep, pebbly road, these thoughts bringing after them the reflection that he had better end his troubles by throwing himself into the lake. In the white walls of the lane a door stood open here and there into green gardens, with trellises and flowering bushes ; then came a sheltering arbour of vines just coming into fresh green leaf. Farther on, the path, shaded by trees, runs along the upper edge of a ravine full of tumbled stones, the bed of a mountain stream, which at this time of year trickles along very gently, making a pool here and there, where the washerwomen are busy, with coloured handkerchiefs tied over their heads. Higher up, the ravine is full of bright, budding trees ; the path, on its way to an old convent perched among the rocks, passes under a deep archway with a Latin inscription, and then goes on in shade, the ravine low down on the right, and on the left a rocky wall rising high, covered with bushes, and moss, and ferns. Here and there, in this way to the sanctuary, are broad flights of steps to make the ascent easier ; here and there is a grated chapel, with groups of life-size figures in painted terra-cotta—scenes from the Gospels, the Nativity, the Last Supper, very

grotesque and yet solemn in the half-darkness of the caverns where they were arranged so long ago. Looking back from the path, through a frame of delicate green and brown branches, the lake lies calm, and blue, and brilliant in the afternoon sunshine, and up beyond, their white faintly streaked with grey, the mountains stand against the deep, quiet sky.

Gerald walked up through all this, and presently more steps brought him to the old yellow buildings of the convent. A low, dark arch bore the inscription, "Strada ai Monti"; but he thought he would see the end of this ascent first, so he went on up more flights of steps, with strange sacred emblems and pictures here and there, till he came into the square paved loggia of the convent, with the monks' house on one side, looking ruinous and old, and high arches forming a sort of cloister before the church door. It was all open to the sun and air, brown and yellow with years of sun. Little lizards, the only living things Gerald had seen since the washerwomen, ran in and out among the old crumbling stones. To the right, over a low wall, one could look straight down the rock into the valley, over the red roofs of Locarno to the lake, with purple shadows crossing it. A very steep path, with white glaring stations, led up from the town to the convent on this side. The way by which Gerald had come was too pleasant and easily winding for the pilgrims who really came to pay their devotion at the shrine of Our Lady of the Rock.

There was a strange charm about the convent, high, and lonely, and still, with such calm spring beauty in earth and air all round it. It seemed to be deserted by everything except the lizards; but presently a nightingale began to sing, and Gerald looked over the wall and saw that there was a garden down below, with arches of budding vines, and two old brown monks working in it silently. Just under the wall the garden was full of pink stocks. As Gerald stood there, leaning his elbows on the sun-baked stones, tired and anxious, with a half-envying thought of the contrast between those monks and himself, he became aware that there was somebody in the narrow open gallery which ran along by the south wall of the church, a sort of passage from the court where he was standing. Somebody was there, leaning on the wall like himself, looking at the stocks and listening to the nightingale. Her head was turned away

from him, but they became conscious almost at the same moment of each other's presence. Directly afterwards she had looked round, and he had joined her in the little gallery.

Theo's struggles with herself had not been much less than his, and the consequence of them was that she received him very quietly—coldly, Gerald thought. He feared now that he had offended her hopelessly at Basle, and became very miserable.

"I brought my sketch-book," Theo said, after the first rather constrained greeting. "But all this is too lovely to be sketched."

"It is a nice old place," said Gerald, looking vaguely round at the walls. Then he was silent for a minute; she did not speak; it was the strangest meeting. "I think Ada is out walking somewhere," he said presently. "Thank you so much for the telegram."

"You got it?" said Theo absently. "Ada? Oh yes, she is gone with my maid, a little farther up the hill. I liked this so much, I said I would wait for them here. You have not seen Ada yet, then?"

"No," said Gerald. After another pause he added: "I saw those two fellows; they are both off, one to Italy and the other to England. So, thanks to you and Lady Redcliff, there is an end of that trouble."

"Ah yes, that is very nice. I'm so glad," said Theo.

In all Gerald's acquaintance with her he had never seen her so absent, so dreamy, so evidently unconscious of what she was saying. She would not look at him; she had not looked at him yet; she kept her head a little turned away; her eyes were following one or two boats with white awnings, slowly crossing the blue of the lake. Gerald, looking at her, began to feel desperate. If she meant to show him that he must always remain where he was now, that his conduct at Basle could not be forgiven, and must never be alluded to again—why, she little knew what sort of feeling she had to deal with, if she thought it could be checked in such a way as this. She ought to have been cold all along, if she meant to be cold now. Was she quite heartless? So thought this wildly unreasonable young man.

"You like this, don't you?" he said presently, in a low voice. "Couldn't you stand here for ever?"

"Yes, I think I could," Theo answered. "It is so peaceful, so unlike all that life down below."

"It would drive me mad very soon," said Gerald. She took no notice of this

discordant speech, and he went on, after another of those painful, thrilling silences: "I suppose Ada will be ready to start to-morrow morning. I have nothing to go back to, but I can't stay here, and I must look out for some kind of work. I've got a notion of going to Africa, to the Diamond Fields, and trying my luck there—only I don't know what to do with her—— But I am boring you."

"Oh no; tell me," said Theo.

"I'm turned off," said Gerald, trying to speak lightly, "and I've got no money and no interest, and getting work is a serious thing nowadays."

"Did not you expect that something of this kind would happen?" said Theo, still with her faraway gaze.

"Of course I did; and it is not that which makes me miserable. I have expected it ever since last autumn; and now, may I confess something to you before I go away, and never see you again?"

She consented by a little movement of her head, but no words came.

"You won't understand it, because you don't know what temptation is," said Gerald. "I've reminded you before of that evening when you were riding with Mr. Goodall, and I met you at the gate. I had had a talk with my brother that day, and I felt I must get some money somehow and take Ada away. There were some valuable bonds in the iron safe at the office, belonging to the Company——"

He moved a little away from her, and stood leaning on the wall, hiding his face in his hands, wondering, the moment after he had spoken, what fiend of self-destruction had made him speak. Of course it was all over now; and as there was no happiness to be had anyhow, he might as well have left her with a fairly good opinion of him.

Theo turned towards him, looked at him, and the shadow of a smile came into her face, and her eyes shone as she said in a low voice:

"But you did not——"

"You stopped me," he said.

Though he did not look up, the sweetness of her voice encouraged him to go on. She was thoughtful and sad, but there was a strange happiness in her face; she stood and looked down at him as he talked. The lizards darted about on the warm wall, undisturbed by these quiet presences.

"I must go away and never see you again," Gerald repeated. "I dare not see

you again; it's beyond bearing. I'm afraid you are angry with me for losing my senses at Basle—but it is very hard. You can't have any notion what it is. I'm not going to ask you to say a word to me, now or ever, but there can't be much harm in telling you what you know already."

He stood upright, with a quick look into her face. She was very pale, with drooping eyelids, and he thought she looked colder than ever.

"You don't care for me," he said, "and I suppose you never could, even if I were rich, and dared ask you. But I'm glad you know that I love you a thousand times better than life, and always shall. Now let me kiss your hand again," he added more quietly, "and I will never trouble you any more. I have been wrong, perhaps, but you must remember that I am most awfully unhappy."

Something in her calmness had a calming effect on him. It seemed as if the cold shadow of the inevitable, to which they must resign themselves, had fallen over them both. He kissed her hand gently and walked away. For a moment Theo gazed again across the lake, then she looked after him; he was just passing into the sunlit court outside. Suddenly, flushing crimson, she made a few quick steps towards the archway, with both hands stretched out.

"Come back!" she said, just above her breath, but so low that it seemed hardly possible he could hear it.

He did hear it, however, and he turned round, and was by her side again in a moment.

"Don't you know?" Theo whispered to him, and it was perhaps still more wonderful that he heard that.

The archway threw a friendly little shadow, and the nightingale sang louder than ever in the garden, and the old monks moved slowly about among their vines without a suspicion of the strange thing which had happened in their own loggia above.

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A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL,

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XLV. DICK SURPASSES EVEN HIMSELF IN MAGNANIMITY.

IDA had another sleepless night of wretchedness, thinking this time less of Archie's baseness than of Dick's nobleness. She recalled again and again his declaration that there were times when he was so selfish as almost to wish her poor again merely that she might seem nearer to him; and she compared this declaration with the sudden access of fervour in his attentions when Mr. Tuck's intestacy appeared to have left her penniless. What had she to give in return for a love so loyal and unalloyed? Nothing, absolutely; for to him money was nothing.

Ida was only less unhappy about Dick than about Archie. To marry a man whom she did not love was a wrong to herself and her self-respect of which no one could have a keener sense than Ida; but such a marriage was a thousandfold more a sin and shame when the man loved her, and cared only for her love, after Dick's noble fashion. At least she must be honest with him, and tell him frankly that she had for him every feeling—regard, esteem, affection—except that love which he asked, and which he himself gave so generously. If he would take her thus, she must be his.

Ida came down to breakfast with the resolve to give her conscience this relief at least, and to give it at once. She and Dick breakfasted alone, as Mrs. Tuck never came down so early; and Ida was pained to remark that Dick was silent and depressed, which with him was quite unprecedented. Plainly he was brooding over the impending trouble and disgrace

in which a generous act of friendship had involved him.

When the breakfast things were removed Dick walked to the window, and looked out into the busy street with eyes which saw nothing, and a furrowed and clouded brow. Ida laid her hand timidly on his arm, and said in a voice full of sympathy:

"It is this trouble?"

"What trouble?" cried Dick with a start; and then, remembering and recovering himself in a moment, added: "Yes, dear; I had forgotten for a moment that I had been so selfish as to mention it to you. Do not trouble about it, dear; it will all come right, I dare say."

"If you would only let me make it right. You would let me, I'm sure, if you knew how great a relief it would be to me; as great as it could be to you, I think."

"No, no," cried Dick positively, peremptorily, almost pettishly. "I couldn't think of such a thing for a moment. It would distress me more than the annoyance itself."

Ida was silenced as much by the petulance of his tone as by his words. Dick relapsed into an absent and absorbed condition of gloom; while Ida, in a silence hardly less troubled, was gathering courage for her confession and the fate which hung by it. At last she said tremulously:

"I also have a great trouble which I ought to have told you. I had not the courage"—pause, during which Dick looked at her curiously—"I had not the courage, because I owed you so much—my life and more—and I could not bring myself to tell you how little I had to give in return——"

"You do not love me?" interrupted Dick, with an unexpected quickness and eagerness.

"I have no heart to give any one, but——"

"You are unhappy in this engagement," broke in Dick breathlessly. "It is as I thought—as I feared. I must bear it as I can," turning away towards the window to hide the anguish of his soul.

"I am unhappy in having so little to give in return for all I owe you," cried Ida in bitter distress. "But if you care to accept the little I have to give—gratitude, esteem, affection——"

"But not love," groaned Dick with still averted face, interrupting her for the third time. "Yet, what you can give, however little, would be enough for me. But you, Ida, you could not be happy with a man you did not love, and your happiness is more to me than my own. I cannot accept this sacrifice. You are free," with a pause for emotion between each sentence.

"It is not that——" began Ida in a piteous voice. But Dick would save her chivalrously the pain of all explanation.

He faced quickly round to stop her by the question :

"Ida, do you love me—love me as you feel you ought to love the man you are to marry?"

Ida remained miserably dumb, with flushed face and downcast eyes. She could not say "Yes;" and "No" she could not express in words gracious and gentle enough to satisfy her.

"Can you think then, dear, I should force you to marry me in mere payment of a debt? No, no—I am glad you came frankly to ask to be released from an unhappy engagement——"

"I did not——"

"I cannot let you go on, Ida, when every word is a pain for you to speak and for me to hear. I know too well what you would say. You like me, but you do not love me, and you feel it is not right to give your hand where you cannot give your heart. Is it not so? Ah, Ida, I've seen my fate in your face before to-day. Again and again I have feared you were about to say to me what you have said to me now—that nothing but unhappiness could come of this engagement. I cannot blame you, and you must not blame yourself, for asking me at last to set you free. It was brave and true, and like you, dear; and it is for me to try to bear it bravely and truly. But to do this I cannot stay here; I cannot stay near you, see you, hear you, long for you, day after day. I cannot do it. I must go. You will explain to my aunt——"

But at this moment Mrs. Tuck entered the room.

"Leave us together, dear," whispered Dick, "and I will explain to her."

Then Dick stepped to the door, opened it for Ida, closed it behind her, and returned.

"Why, what is all this about, Dick?" asked his aunt point-blank.

Then Dick showed an immediate and consummate mastery of the emotion which had bolted with him but now; for, with his aunt, though he was gloomy, he was businesslike, and not, as with Ida, sentimental and despairing.

"Ida wishes the engagement broken off," he answered shortly.

"Wishes the engagement broken off!" exclaimed his aunt, in amazement that Ida should take such a step without a word of warning to her. "But why?"

"Oh, the usual formula made and provided for such cases," he replied bitterly. "She has the highest respect and regard for me, but not the love a woman ought to feel for the man she marries."

"You have had a quarrel?" asked his aunt in complete perplexity.

"Quarrel with her? As well expect a man to quarrel with a proposition in Euclid. No, of course there was no quarrel."

"And you have released her?"

"What would you have me do? Bring an action against her for breach of promise?" asked Dick irritably.

"I can't but think there's some mistake, Dick. You misunderstood her in some way. If she had really meant to break off the engagement she would have spoken first to me about it."

"There was no possibility of a mistake," cried Dick very positively.

His aunt shook her head.

"You've taken her up hastily, I'm sure."

Dick turned away in impatient dissent.

"Well, Dick, it's very easy to find out," she added, rising to seek Ida.

Then did Dick's proper pride take fire.

"I will not again be forced down the girl's throat," he cried with an unusual vehemence. "No man with the least self-respect could marry a girl who said to him what she said to me this morning. I'm not blaming her. It was only the truth for her to say that if she married me it would be merely in payment of a debt. But to press for my pound of flesh after such a speech would be unmanly in me and cruel to her. Pray tell her, for I shall not see her again."

"You're not going away?" interrupted his aunt, aghast.

Dick, for a moment, could express his surprise only by a look—it was too deep for words. At last he exclaimed: "Not going! Do you suppose I care nothing for her, or even that she cares so little for me, that my presence, after what has passed, can be anything but a trouble? Of course I have to go," in an injured and pathetic tone.

His aunt sat down again helplessly. Dick meant to go; that was certain. It was certain, also, that no ordinary provocation would have made him resign Ida and her fortune so decidedly. It was a great trouble. To be left stranded here alone in London, without the escort of her superbly handsome nephew, of whom she was so proud, was bad; but this was nothing to the sudden and complete collapse of her cherished scheme for the union of the two people she loved best in the world. Was the collapse hopeless? She could not think so. Ida would be certain to recover from the utter prostration produced by the discovery of her cousin's baseness, and then Dick's time would come. Meanwhile, his absence would tell immensely in his favour—of that there was no doubt at all. The very magnanimity of his departure would plead powerfully for him; while, besides, Mrs. Tuck had felt more than once before now that Ida in all these months saw too much of Dick. Occasional absence is to love what night is to a plant—a necessity to its life and growth. Smart as the shock was, these considerations passed so quickly through her mind that she seemed to reply almost immediately to Dick's "Of course I have to go."

"Perhaps it would be best," she said, to Dick's surprise and chagrin. He had reckoned upon her being moved to vain tears and remonstrances, and to sympathy which would take at last a substantial form. If he must leave the fleshpots of Egypt, at least he would not go out empty-handed. He would "borrow" of the Egyptians.

"It isn't 'best' at all," he retorted querulously. "It can't be helped; but it's just the worst thing that could happen to me at this moment. I have lost all the shooting of the season, refused no end of invitations, in order to fetch and carry for her! And now I've nowhere to go, and no money either," in a lamentable voice.

Dick seemed, and in truth was, utterly dejected—a mood so unusual with him as to move his aunt deeply.

"I meant best for your chances of Ida.

Dick. She's not herself now for many reasons; but if you leave her for a month or two, she'll welcome you back, you may depend upon it," very positively and encouragingly.

But Dick was not encouraged at all, though of this he said nothing.

"But how am I to live for a month or two?" speaking, and feeling also, as the victim of a shameful and capricious eviction—turned out by Ida on the roadside, naked and destitute, without cause and without warning.

This brought back his aunt to the point. She gave Dick all the money she could possibly spare, and promised him more in the course of a few weeks. Then did his spirits revive within him, and Richard was himself again.

Never was there a man to whom the present was more than it was to Dick, or fortune more "the Cynthia of the minute." For decency's sake, and policy's also, he wore before his aunt a bruised and bleeding heart upon his sleeve; but his bosom's lord sat lightly on his throne, and he went on his way rejoicing. Even if he had lost Ida's fortune, he had retained the price of it—his freedom; and so long as there was money in hand and duns out of sight, the loss of her fortune seemed a less evil to him than the loss of his freedom. Therefore, Dick departed in his ordinary spirits.

After his departure, his aunt sought out Ida in her room. Dick, fearful of a reconciliation, had taken care to keep his aunt by him under the affectionate pretext of wishing them to see all they could of each other in the few moments that remained to them. Therefore, he had got well away before his aunt could hear Ida's account of the affair, which differed somewhat from Dick's.

From her version it appeared that Dick's excess of sensitiveness and self-distrust had hurried him into imagining that she was asking a release from their engagement, when she was merely trying to express how worthless was the little she had to offer him compared with all he had given to her and done for her.

"I knew he must have taken you up wrongly, my dear; but there was excuse for it, you'll admit. For some time he must have seen—who could help seeing?—that you had no heart to give."

Ida sat silent, conscience-stricken and distressed.

"He couldn't blame you, my dear, and he doesn't," resumed Mrs. Tuck, with an

eye to their re-engagement two months hence. "It was the last thing he said to me when he bid me good-bye and wished me to bid you good-bye for him."

"Has he gone away?" exclaimed Ida, while—must we confess it?—her heart leapt within her, so great was her relief.

She thought till now that Mrs. Tuck had come to patch up the unhappy engagement.

"Of course he has gone. How could you think he would stay? And yet I think he would have conquered his pride and stayed—he longed so much to be near you—but for his consideration for you. He felt, he said, that his presence, after what had passed, would pain you."

"He is so noble!" exclaimed Ida with an admiration whose warmth was due in some degree to the fullness of her heart at her release from the engagement.

"At all events he has shown, dear, not only that he loved you for yourself alone, but that he loved you better than himself."

A ROMAN HOLIDAY.

By way of novelty, this year I conceived the happy thought to spend my Easter holiday in the Eternal City. The novelty, of course, was quite peculiar to myself, for a visit to Old Rome is by no means a new thing, in Holy Week especially. But although my years have now exceeded half a century, I had never put this finish to my classical education; and, although I am as fond of art as most men of my age (in either meaning of the word), my eyes had never feasted on the treasures of the Vatican.

People rush about the world so fast in these later days, that a run to Rome seems quite a commonplace occurrence. Fifty years ago a man would make his will, and solemnly prepare for weeks or months beforehand, in venturing to start upon so perilous a journey. But now he just packs a portmanteau, and jumps into a hansom, and a couple of days later you may meet him calmly smoking a cigar along the Corso. Leaving London any week-day at ten in the forenoon, you may get a hasty dinner at Milan the next evening; and if you like to pass another sleepless night in travelling, you may proceed directly in your so-called sleeping-carriage, and in less than fifty hours from your last glance at St. Paul's, you may

enjoy the pleasure of your first glimpses of St. Peter's.

But "*festina lente*" is a good old Roman caution, and you would do more wisely not to be in such hot haste. If you allow yourself the time for a cool moment of reflection, you may conclude that by arriving more than half-dead with fatigue, you would be going just the way to court, if not to catch, the Roman fever. So, ere you begin to gallop through the galleries of Rome, you had better stop a day or two at Florence, and take a few preliminary canter through the mile or so of pictures which beautify its palaces, the Pitti and Uffizi. Perhaps the Tribune at the former may remind you of the famous Salon Carré at the Louvre, and even well-nigh rival it in your artistic admiration, and perhaps you may agree that the Venus de Medici loses none of her fair charms for being seen in the same room with the Madonna au Chardonneret. There is the Madonna de la Chaise some half-mile farther on, to which you must pay likewise your artistic adoration; and ere you cross the river (without quitting the galleries) to perform this act of homage, you may pause some score of times to put a special note of admiration in your Baedeker.

Then there is the grey old palace to be gazed at, with its tall, noble, massive tower, which, if you be in a meditative mood, may possibly incline you to think for half a second of the fate of Savonarola, or the history of Romola; while hard-by stands the Loggia, with its bronze and marble statues, which hardly will remind you of those adorning Cockspur Street, any more than will the stately fountain near them recall you to a vision of the squirts by Charing Cross. Then there are some half-dozen splendid churches to be seen, notably San Miniato, with its delicious old mosaic work, and from the hill whereon it stands you have perhaps the finest view of the fair city—"Firenze la Bella," as its minstrels love to call it—with its high campanile rising in the midst of its brown roofs clustered round the huge Duomo, which far overtops them all, and all the lesser domes, and spires, and minarets as well, and which, when he planned St. Peter's, Michael Angelo declared that he would not try to imitate, but could not hope to beat.

Travellers who cross the sea experience a change of sky, but not of mind, by doing so. This sage remark was made, in half

as many words, by an eminent Italian, who lived in Rome some nineteen centuries ago, and its truth has been attested by many later writers. It occurred to me to think of it, on seeing a lawn tennis court in the place which is the Hyde Park of the fashionable Florentines. I need hardly say the players were of insular extraction, and were regarded with some wonder by certain of the bystanders, who vainly tried to fathom the deep meaning of the game. There was an orchestra of blackbirds, whose flutings sweetly echoed through the tall witch-elm close by; and in the avenues there rolled a double row of carriages of various sorts and shape, from the lowly one-horse shay to the lordly four-in-hand. Two six-in-hands there were, close followed by a four, and their owner, I was told, used formerly to harness all his eight pairs to one coach. I guessed his nationality to be more western than my own, and was not surprised at finding that my shot had hit the mark. We Great Britons are eccentric when we live abroad, but there are millionaires from Greater Britain who are more eccentric and abnormal still. I heard it gravely stated while I was at Rome that one of them had made a bid for the Palace of the Cæsars, and that another had a wish to purchase Trajan's Pillar, and put it up in Broadway, with a statue of the purchaser stuck upon the top.

How brightly the sun shone on the fair morning on which we left Florence, and how lovely the old city looked in that clear light! London is, of course, the finest city in the world, as every Cockney schoolboy knows and is prepared against all comers to do battle to attest. Still, its fogs are apt to dim the beauty of its streets; and after a dark winter spent among its chimney-pots, one feels in spirit brightened by a peep at the blue sky. And though Primrose Hill may be poetical in name, its scenery scarce equals the views seen from the Pincian; nor can the scrubby little shrubs which straggle about St. Paul's pretend to any show of rivalry with the roses, palms, and orange-trees which flourish by St. Peter's, in the gardens of the Pope.

Italy is full of mountains, and Florence lies embosomed in a plain amid encircling peaks. From most of these the winter snows had melted ere I saw them, though a white patch here and there still glistened in the sun. The softer hillsides underneath were covered with thick olive-groves, and these were putting on their fresh spring

drees of tender silver-grey, which formed a pretty contrast to the light green verdure of the rye and wheat and grass crops sprouting forth beneath. Here and there the "arbre de Judée," which we miscall the "Judas tree," was bursting into purple blossom from every branch and twig; or there fell from the bare rock a bright cascade of yellow-broom. Here and there I spied a village nestling in a nook on the hillside, or still more picturesquely perched upon the top, the white houses closely clustering, as if for safety's sake, around the mother church. Indeed, the views were all so pretty that I speedily ceased to grumble at the slowness of the train which, by a humorous misnomer, was described as an express. It jogged leisurely along, at a good old-fashioned pace, and stopped frequently, for some five minutes at a time, as though, after panting slowly up a steep incline, the engine grew asthmatic, and needed to take breath. But in Italy a "Flying Dutchman" is utterly unknown, and the difference between express and ordinary trains seems merely to be this: the former stop at every station on the line, and the latter stop at all of them, and pull up pretty often in the never-long-continued intervals between.

By a sentimental traveller, the first sight of St. Peter's is expected with anxiety, and enshrined among the happiest of moments in his life. I am not much prone to sentiment, but I confess to poking out my head with more than common quickness from the window of the carriage when I first heard a whisper that St. Peter's was in view. It is easy for a cynic to sneer at such confessions, and to smile at the absurdity that any feeling of emotion should be caused by the sight of a big building with a dome, which every Cockney tourist will compare with his St. Paul's. But poetry is not quite dead in this prosaic age, and anyone who has a bit of poetry about him, when he catches his first glimpse of the Eternal City, may be pardoned for a wish to stamp it on his memory, and to set apart that moment from the ordinary minutes of his usual daily life.

Seen a dozen miles away, St. Peter's bears, no doubt, a certain likeness to St. Paul's, but the resemblance grows more distant upon a nearer view. The vastness of its size may be best realised afar, whence there is nothing of Rome visible but this one stupendous dome. Looked at from the Pincio, its grandeur is marred some-

what by its big neighbour the Vatican, which in ugliness may vie with any palace in the world. Seen from this point, its position is a little disappointing, placed as it is beyond the Tiber, just within the city walls. Moreover, seen from this point, its yellow stones look clean and new, as though quite freshly quarried; and the soft, grey dome is lacking in that halo of antiquity, which, thanks to London smoke and fog, so fully hangs around St. Paul's.

I have heard people declare that their first entrance to St. Peter's quite took away their breath. Perhaps their lungs were weakly; assuredly my respiration did not fail me at the sight. Splendour and magnificence most lavishly were there; and yet there seemed a something wanting, or else a bit too much. If the ghost of Michael Angelo ever walks about to contemplate his work, it must surely shudder at the sight of all those fat boys who—sculptured in white marble—sprawl about the walls. Nor will its anger be appeased by a stroll outside the portico, to look at the façade which hides his splendid dome; though possibly its wrath may be mitigated somewhat by a walk along those noble Doric colonnades, which Bernini by a happy thought was able to erect. They contain four rows of columns, near three hundred in their number, arranged in semi-circle, and leading to the portico; and they bear above a hundred and fifty statues of the saints upon the roof which they support. Commercially considered, no doubt, St. Paul's Churchyard may be a splendid place; but the Piazza di St. Pietro, regarded architecturally, somewhat throws it in the shade.

One must go to Italy to learn the use of marble as a decorative substance. In England one may see it merely useful for a mantelpiece, or a mournful mural tablet; whereas in Italy vast palaces are adorned with it throughout, and churches are profusely enriched with its rare colours. Notably St. Paolo is conspicuous for its marble work. You may get to it by tramway from the piazza which bears the title, "Mouth of Truth," if you can bear the thought of travelling by a tramcar through Old Rome. From porphyry to malachite, hues of every shade adorn its pavement and its walls, and among its massive columns are some a yard thick at their base, and made of delicately veined and gleaming yellow alabaster. But the marbles are less wondrous even here than the mosaics, which date from the fifth

century, and are as beautiful in colouring as they are quaint in design.

After a week or two of steady sight-seeing in Rome, one is apt to be confused in one's memory of churches, and to mingle their chief features so inextricably together, that one is puzzled when one tries to give each patron saint his due. I fancied myself singularly afflicted in this way, but was relieved by hearing scraps of conversation in places such as reading-rooms, and even churches, very possibly, where conversation, as a rule, is presumed to be tabooed. I have heard of tourists finding the Bambino at the Lateran, or admiring the pure Gothic of the nave of Santa Croce, or removing the fine cloisters of Santa Maria Maggiore in order to confer them on St. Pietro in Montorio, the lovely view of Rome from which will, I hope, never fade from the pictures in my mind. Still harder is the trial to recollect the whereabouts of only half-a-score, say, of the hundreds upon hundreds of magnificent art-treasures in the dozen or so palaces and galleries in Rome. It may be easy to remember that the finest of all statues—to my thinking, at least—the Dying Gladiator, is not to be found near the Apollo Belvedere; and that it was not at the Capitol that Raffaele wrought the noble Stanze which have been immortally connected with his name. But who, after a first visit, can remember the chief beauties of the Barberini Gallery, without confounding them with those of the Borghese or the Doria, or even the immeasurable Vatican itself? A young lady frankly told me, in the confidence engendered by the clatter and the chatter of a foreign table d'hôte, that she had twice been to the Vatican for some three hours at a stretch, and yet she really could not say if she had seen the Madonna di Foligno. She candidly confessed, too, that she had seen so many splendid churches since she had come to Italy, that she quite longed to have a look at a plain dissenting chapel, or a Quaker's place of meeting, just by way of a change. That a young lady should forget if she had seen a world-famed picture within eight-and-forty hours after paying it a visit, might have surprised me just a little, if I had not heard the story of the lady who forgot if in her wanderings abroad she had ever been to Rome, until reminded by her daughter of the buying of a bonnet there, which had made a durable impression on her mind.

We Londoners hear lots of sparrows

chirping in our squares, and our parks are sweetly musical with blackbird and with thrush. But the song of the nightingale ever is mute there, for Philomel is not a lover of our fogs, and declines to run the risk of catching a sore-throat by singing in their midst. At Rome, however, the pure air seems most inspiring to her song. You may hear it as you drive amid the crowd upon the Pincio, or stroll about the shady groves and flower-scented gardens, where the Roman nobles kindly let you wander as you will. It charms you while you muse among the ancient ruins; even in the silence of the distant Colosseum, or amid the myriad roses that bloom upon the Palatine, or clamber up the crumbling walls, and let their clusters tumble thickly in huge, sweet-scented cascades. Here Philomel sings boldly in broad daylight, as if no fear of cage or kitchen-ever came into her mind; though possibly her ancestors may have been caught and plucked by Nero, or had their throats cut by Caligula, and their sweet tongues popped in a pie.

The season was just closing when I arrived in Rome, and so I happily escaped most of the fashionable sights, which perhaps a little tend to cockneyfy the noble classic city. I was not asked to see the hounds throw off on the Campagna, nor was I invited to a picnic in the Baths of Caracalla. I might have seen the Colosseum ablaze with Bengal-lights, but I felt little wish to view it in that Crystal Palace fashion. I likewise might have joined a party to the Catacombs; but I was not tempted to wander underground, when there was so much to go and see above it. Of course I have been told that I have missed the best of sights, but that is a remark which no man can escape, however much he tries to tire his eyes when travelling. Rome was not built in a day, and hardly can be seen in much less than a month or two. I went there for a week; and when that was over I felt myself compelled to stay a fortnight longer, and when at length I left I had but just begun to find my way about, without the need of asking it, and to see a few of the best sights without hurrying to look at them.

If I had been a sporting character, I could hardly have timed my visit any better than I did, for a great event came off precisely in the middle of it. Surely the First Roman Derby was a race to be remembered, and a "fixture" (as the

phrase goes) to be noted down beforehand. But for want of sporting instincts my memory for "fixtures" (excepting in a lease, perhaps) is generally faulty; and when the sun arose on that eventful morning, I had no recollection of what had been announced for it. Indeed, by me, the famous day might have wholly passed unrecognised, but for the chance hearing of the pop of a champagne-cork. This startled me a little as I sat eating my breakfast; for it seemed a little early in the day for such explosions. And then I suddenly remembered that it was the Roman Derby Day, and my memory was confirmed by a glance at the gay couple who were drinking the champagne, and who looked as gravely glum as a pair of funeral mutes, which is a common look with racing men until, vinously or otherwise, their spirits are excited. Somehow Rome and racing hardly seemed words congruous, though they were alliterative; and I felt but small desire to see the Appian Way invaded by a host of bawling betting-men, or to hear their hoarse cries bellowing, "Three to one bar one," or "I'll lay against the favourite," even though transferred into more musical Italian, disturbing the sweet silence of the desolate Campagna.

But if horses did not tempt me, I found donkeys more attractive, though it was not in a race, but a march-past, I beheld them. One fine evening the Corso was crowded for an hour or more from one end to the other, to see the Roman artists returning in procession from their annual day's outing. Many carried blazing torches in their hands, and all were mounted on the long-eared coursers I have named. They were attired in burlesque costume to represent a mimic army, and wore mostly monstrous pasteboard helmets, and pantomime jack-boots. For the heightening of stage effect, some of the stalwart troopers brandished long lath - swords, which presented the dread aspect of being steeped in gore. The march-past closed with a small detachment of artillery, a couple or so of wooden cannon, ass-drawn like the rest; and a covered market-cart to serve by way of ambulance. Although expectantly in waiting from eight till nearly ten, the crowd stood patiently enough, and neither shoved nor shouted, nor indulged in any horseplay when the donkeys came in sight. If I could picture a procession of our Royal Academicians, all arrayed in fancy dresses, and headed

by their graceful president, and riding home on donkey-back from Richmond Hill or Greenwich, with torches blazing in their hands, and a band of martial music blaring in their midst; still my mind would shrink from fancying the welcome they would meet with if they attempted a forced march along our crowded streets.

It is difficult to say something new about Old Rome. On so well-worn a subject scarce a word can now be written without committing plagiarism. From the ancient odes of Horace to the recent walks of Hare, the theme has been worn threadbare by a myriad of writers. All varieties of sentiment and style, too, have been spent on it, from the lofty verse of Byron to the lowly prose of Baedeker. If I venture to remark that there are really two Old Romes, the words may sound a little startling, but there is no novel truth in them. Everybody knows there is the Pagan Old Rome, which bids us go and worship its fine art in the Pantheon or the Capitol, and there is likewise the Christian Old Rome, which has added many a noble shrine to the temples of the past, and has raised many a stately dome for a far higher purpose than ancient heathen worship. To me, the older of the two Old Romes possessed by far the greater interest, and I visited the Forum much oftener than the Vatican. I am rarely given to make a sentimental journey, but I certainly enjoyed a stroll along the Sacred Way, although its big, uneven stones are not a pleasant pavement. Still, I loved to go day-dreaming along that ancient thoroughfare, and see, in my mind's eye, some pictures of the past, some street scenes of Old Rome, when there was life in the old city. I liked to fill the Forum with the market-folk who flocked to it, and to fancy how the togas went thronging to the Capitol when the news spread through the city of the death of Julius Cæsar. I liked to hazard a conjecture where Brutus might have stood when he harangued the populace just after that occurrence, and to guess about the spot where the wounds of Cæsar's body were exposed to public view, when Marc Antony gave voices to those "poor dumb mouths" in a speech perhaps less eloquent than Shakespeare has reported of him. There are but a few hundred yards of this old sacred street still visible; but what a host of stately columns may be seen along its course, and what scenes of blood, and violence, and splendour, and decay its black stones must have witnessed!

More than all, perhaps, I loved to wander round the spacious Colosseum, and to fill its vast circumference with rows of fancied faces, gazing all intently on the tragic scenes below. There, to make a Roman holiday, trained slaves and wretched captives were butchered by the score, and Christian maidens by the dozen were flung to the wild beasts. See, now the tender maidenhair is sprouting where their maiden blood was shed, and sweet wild-flowers are springing even in the very dens whence the wild beasts may have sprung. They who slaughtered the first Christians have perished in their turn. The temples where the heathen butchers may have worshipped are laid low, while a thousand bells are chiming far on high in the churches of the Cross. Where the cries of combat sounded, and the clamour of the people rose into a roar, now is heard the gentle cooing of the doves that nestle in the arches, or the twitter of the willow-wrens that fly about the fennel-plants, whose tall bloom-stems rise like aloe-stalks, bearing their yellow blossoms high into the blue sky.

As one looks upon its ruins, one cannot help reflecting on the evidence they furnish of the wealth of Ancient Rome, and the luxury of life to which its people were accustomed. What a rich feast there must have been on the Palatine alone of fine architecture decorated with most splendid statuary, may be judged in some slight measure from the fragments that are left. There were no jerry-builders in those days. The ruins of Old Rome seem meant to last as long as the hills whereon she stood. On the Palatine, for instance, there are walls of solid brickwork fully five feet thick; and stucco hard as stone, to the depth of quite four inches, is spread to give a surface for fine fresco work inside. It was somewhere on the Palatine that Cicero built his famous house, to which he added a top storey, as he mentions in a letter, and thereby robbed great Cæsar's palace of its view of the Capitol. Some notion of the grandeur of the Ciceronian edifice may be gathered from the fact that, when it was destroyed in a tumult of the mob, its owner received above a hundred thousand pounds (reckoned in our English money) as compensation for his loss, and grumbled very loudly at this insufficient recompense. I doubt if the most rising, or even the most risen, of our members of the bar could afford to live in houses of the rental represented by an outlay such as this. I doubt, too, if our civil engineers will

leave behind them works more lasting than the aqueducts which traverse the Campagna; or in their engineering cleverness can much surpass the skill displayed before the age of steam. There was great flourishing of trumpets about the movement of a single monolith from Egypt, and the uplifting it upon the Embankment of the Thames. In Rome there are a dozen of such obelisks to be seen, but history is dumb as to the method of their transit, and no journalist recorded all the perils that attended their passage up the Tiber, whose swift current must have certainly impeded their ascent.

When the prophesied New Zealander pays his predicted visit to the ruins of old London, he may be as much astonished by our flimsy architecture as he will be by the massiveness of masonry and brickwork which he may still find extant in the ruins of Old Rome. Of the Thames Embankment possibly some few fragments may remain, and a pair of Landseer's lions, perhaps, may have survived, and there may even be a bit or two still left of London Bridge. But of the arches which adorn the Piazza, Covent Garden, no vestige will be visible, while the arch which long has beautified the Piazza del Popolo will still be left intact. Perhaps the Roman aqueducts may even then be found in use, but of the Holborn Viaduct the traveller may vainly look for any trace. The Column "with the buried base" (now happily exhumed), may still be standing where it stood when Childe Harold mused in mournful verse upon its site; and the Colosseum may still excite the wonder of the tourist from New Zealand, who may have found no trace of the Monument of London; nor of the monstrous heap of yet more modern brick and mortar which now forms the Albert Hall.

SOCIAL VILLAGE LIFE IN 1800.

TURNING over a pile of old books and papers which had lain snugly in a garret of an old English manor-house for centuries, some choice treasures of MS. records were discovered, and also some letters which appeared to have but little in them of interest, for they were but of recent date, compared to the volumes carefully written some four centuries since; but yet on running through them, they brought home most forcibly the wondrous change in social life that this century has witnessed.

The principal document which led us back into the home life of 1800, was the fragment of a diary started by a young lady on January 1st in that year. The book in which she began, with probably a fixed resolve to enter, day by day, the great events of her life, has but little of the dainty appearance of a ladies' pocket-book. About a foot square, and an inch thick, bound in stout white parchment, and made of good, stout, strong paper, it looks more like that for which it has since for a time been used, a farmer's account-book, than the pet companion of a lady in her boudoir. The diary-keeping appears to have been an after-thought, as the beginning of the book is occupied by a collection of recipes copied out apparently for the owner of the book, as only a few are in her own handwriting.

Some of these recipes are curious, as "to make a floating island," "to make walnut-water for bruises and cuts;" this is a mild remedy and not particularly unpleasant; but "an approved receipt for a cough, in either young or old," is suggestively unpleasant. "Take a calf's liver and two handfuls of chervil, boil them in a gallon of spring-water to a quart, then strain, and give the patient a coffee-cup full every morning fasting, and every night going to rest." It kindly adds, "If their stomach will stand it, they may take a little at noon," and, perhaps needlessly, enjoins, "they must not take any other medicine whilst under this course." After this it is pleasant to come upon "to make little cakes for tea," which has a cosy ring about it; and, farther on, it is curious to notice how nobility descended in those days to petty little matters concerning the stomach. The last recipe but one is that "my sister uses for her pickled pork; given by Miss —, whose mother got it from the Duke of Somerset." How useful the duke would have been in the butchering department of the Army and Navy Stores! The then and now have their assimilations.

After the recipes, comes poetry. The book is made to do duty as an album, but most of the pieces are written by the fair owner of the volume. The first piece copied is by "Charlotte Smith," "in unison with my own feeling." It commences:

Ah, why will morning with officious care;
but the best part of these lines, and of those that follow, are generally the bits with which M. W., the owner of the book, endorses all the melancholy ideas that are

told in rhymed heroics ; such as in the next piece she places at the head :

"How refreshing sleep is to the miserable none but the wretched know. I can speak from experience."

The diary which comes farther on in the book hardly gives the idea of a wretched woman, but from it may leak out a cause for this phrase. Of course Miss Smith writes a poem To the Moon. This is a sad complaint of Miss Smith's sad fate ; she watches the moon's shadow, although there is no sun eclipse, and regardless of a "Proctor," who is to follow her, yearns to be released from here to live in the (dead ashes of the) moon. This sad and forlorn lady who, in 1800, revels in gaiety, writes, in 1799, over a poem on Hope, by the same Miss Smith, "Could I now feel one hope, life would have charms !"

All the usual subjects of poets are dwelt upon by Miss Smith. Fortitude she hails as a "Nymph of the Rock," and fancy as a "Queen of Shadows." Farther on is copied out an extract from Bidlake's sermons on a good conscience, and following this, is a letter of six or seven quarto pages, written by a servant to her lover, and given to him immediately after her death.

The fragment of the diary itself is headed in full, "January the first, 1800." Without any shirking the matter, here is a full determination to commence the century by keeping a diary, and the first entry reads: "The Miss Greens dined with us ; we had a fiddle in the evening ; sent for Miss — and her brothers Hugh and Joe ; we had a pleasant dance ; did not break up till three o'clock."

On the next day the frost has broken up and they are kept within doors, but on the third a certain John and his sister call, and again the next day, and on the 5th the mother of Mr. John sends, asking the fair diarist to dinner, of course not to meet Mr. John. She enters whom they met and that they "had a pleasant dance and then partook of a very good supper." No sham, ethereal young damsel this ; she enjoys the good things of the earth in spite of her wail, in 1799, of "Could I now feel one hope !" Indeed, she appears to enjoy the world fairly even without one.

The next day she devotes to writing to her sister and friends, of course telling them whom she had met, all about the dances, with not-to-be-resisted notes anent Mr. John.

The next day again, she goes to a ball in

the nearest town, and meets "a number of people there," and John's mother takes her home to supper after the ball, and with glee she states, "we did not go to bed till near six." Again, the next day Mr. John's mother follows up the attack and gives a quiet little dinner to just five other friends, and she, M. W., does not go to bed till past twelve.

But a very short entry tells the story of the next day : "We were alone ; I wrote letters in the eve." The next two days are again full of gaiety at the house of Mr. John's mother.

Sunday is a noteworthy day. The great man from the great house calls and invites them to a ball on the Thursday ; she also goes out to dinner and sees a little lot of grandchildren sent home from their Christmas visit to their grandmother. The old lady is left in great grief for their loss, and the children were likewise much affected.

Day after day in the January month is but one succession of dining and dancing, always with the same people, and the result is that on the following Sunday a note is made, "I had a great pain in my head." But the next day the snow prevents their going out and so gives her a day of rest. On the following day again they dine out "on a little goose, won at a raffle." County families rarely now indulge in raffling for geese. The next day is an eventful one ; she goes into the country town on Mr. John's mother's horse behind John ; one can picture John's head being more often turned behind than towards the horse's head.

This is a new pleasure, and a little arrangement appears to have been made for some friends to drive her in a post-chaise on the following day to another small town ; but she does not drive back with them, for curiously enough John is there on his mother's horse, and again she rides home behind him. It was "a very stormy, rainy day, it rained hard all the way ; we were quite wet through," and the entry winds up with the pointed note, "I drew on Mr. — for eight guineas." The next entry is a sad one, and curiously enough the writer enters the date rightly, and crosses it out, entering a wrong one, and the date after this is not put at all, simply the day. It is a very short entry, and tells its own tale : "John went to London ; left us all very low-spirited ; sat at work all day."

Up to this date our fair diarist has not spoken of work, and her duties would

make one think her life but a butterfly existence of pleasure; but the month of January is over, John is gone to far distant London, and the play of life must end, and work begin. There are three or four more entries of visits and visiting, and then comes the entry, Thursday, "Busy ironing all day; very fine weather," and next to it Friday, "Hard at work making shirts for Andrew; hardly moved from my seat the whole day," and yet again the next day, "Very busy shirt-making." On Sunday, February 2nd, the date is again carefully given, and the entry notes the receipt of a letter from a lady-friend, and that they went to church, and ends, "A miry, disagreeable day," and so ends this fragment of a shortlived diary. One month and two days brings to an end the diary which was begun with great decision and exactness.

But this fragment gives the working and holiday life in those old days when the receipt of a letter was noteworthy. For the owner of this diary was of a good family, and moved in high circles, as some old letters which were found with the diary will show.

After the diary are some blank pages, of course meant to have been filled in with the diurnal notes, but the old pastime of copying poetry is again taken up, and some original lines, "written by me," fill some pages. Blair's sermons are again seized upon for an extract, but an event in 1805 arouses her to another poetical effort, and she writes some sixteen lines, "On the last order Lord Nelson gave," cruelly mangling the order by beginning: "England expects each man will act his part."

The old house where this lady lived and loved, and where John came riding up on his mother's horse to take her behind him to go into the little country town, is a fine specimen of the comfortable old English mansions, now mostly being turned into farmhouses. It is next door to the church, a side door from the lawn leading into the churchyard, from whence on a Sunday the family issued, receiving the bows and curtsies of the peasants, as they passed up the pathway to the chancel-door to enter the square old pew overshadowed by the pulpit, and hidden from the gaze of the villagers in the nave by the projecting buttresses of the chancel arch.

At the front gates is the village pond, overshadowed by a grand old elm, which is still waving in its beauty, and beneath it are still standing in perfect order the

village stocks, where many a village delinquent has probably been passed by M.W. A row of old pollards shelter the pathway to the church, and upon one of these, called the Vicar's Tree, even to-day are posted the written notices of the great events which convulse the little community. The mark of the tennis-courts are still visible against the north wall of the church, where perchance M.W. had also often seen the villagers enjoying a game of tennis amidst the graves of the village forefathers.

Lying beside the diary were some old letters, the dates upon some of them varying from 1790 to 1805, most of them received apparently by the mother of the young lady, from one who bears a name that was noted in the wars of that date, while various references show the circle in which our family moved, and, together with the diary, they give a striking insight into the life of 1800. These letters being by a lady, unfortunately, have no date; they are written on a Saturday night, or perhaps the day of the month is put, but, alas! never the year; but it would not be difficult to give the exact year. One of this lady's letters refers pathetically to some money which has lately fallen to her. She says: "Mr. B. has paid me a part of my money, and I am soon to have the remainder, thanks to — for what I have got, for if they had not told his brother, I believe the bishop's breaking his neck would not have been much use to me." Probably the bishop would hardly have enjoyed such a business-like reference to his broken neck; but our writer is outspoken, for in the latter part of the same letter she writes: "The poor Duke of Gloucester, who everybody loves, is dangerously ill, and indeed I am afraid there is but little hope of his recovery. It is reported he sent a message by Lord North to the king, entreating him to take care of his wife and children, and that—the brute, I should have said, if he was not the king—made answer, he saw no reason why he should do more for him than he had hitherto done." In another of her letters she says: "I give you some little proof of my esteem and respect for you when I tell you that these moments I employ in writing to you are a part of the last twenty-four hours I shall be in England." They set out for France on the morrow, and her brother being upon secret service, she can say no more about it. At another time it was determined that two young ladies and Molly, the writer's maid,

should go to Dunkirk in Lord Byron's yacht. What trim ladies'-maid would now suffer to be called Molly? The important part of this letter is in the postscript, which runs: "My white gown begins to wear under the arms. How does Mrs. C.'s crape one do?" Colonies were being lost to England, all Europe was combined against her; but this fair dame, dating now from Cobham, gives as her choice bit of news that her white gown is beginning to wear.

Another letter from another lady-friend gives another instance of how christian-names fall out of date. She thanks the one to whom she is writing for her kind attentions to "Charity," who appears to be a daughter, and then continues: "I see upon the papers" (the word "upon" for "in" is always now used in the village) "Lord Cornwallis is appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. I hope he will get Master Andrew"—the young gentleman for whom the shirts were made—"upon the list," etc., giving a little peep into the patronage of the past.

Another letter, which is of a little later date, and has not quite so old-world an appearance, is sent from the quiet little town of Ashford, in Kent, in the year 1805. It is from a son to a mother. Although the youngster alludes pathetically to "the fate of war," having just had to march fourteen miles, his letter has nothing very peculiarly sad about it. Like other youngsters, his allowance troubles him. There being no barracks in Ashford, he has to pay to his captain six shillings a week in excess of his six shillings lodging-money allowed him, which is a great pull from his pay. Ashford must have been very different then from now, or the young rascal presumes upon his mother's ignorance, and profits by the difficulty of travel, for he says, "There is not a lodging to be got of any kind of decency," a little fact his mother would hardly have believed could she have seen the comfortable old town. "You quite hurt me," he says, "by thinking me extravagant. I stint myself as much as possible to avoid troubling you, but you know my pay, and you might of known officers live on it in your time, but it was quite different to these times." His spelling is rather curious, but he is decidedly apt at cajolery. "I had rather cut my hand off than be obliged to trouble you if necessity did not oblige me, but in the course of a few years I hope to repay you. Consider an officer's life. What is he thought of if he shuns his brother-officers, or never to mix with

them in any society, a mere cypher" (he was rather puzzled over "cypher," so he dots the "y" to make sure of it) "by the whole of them. However, I will leave off this subject; I know it vexes you." And so he drops it, and, as he cannot ask for money after this, he continues at once: "Would be obliged to you to send me some shirts, etc." (the "etc." is very good), "as the expedition is expected to be called out every day." What mother could resist this? And so, with another gentle hint, he adds: "I received the money you sent me quite safe, and, rather than it should have distressed you, would have starved myself rather than have written again." And so he writes for "shirts, etc."

Poor fellow! was the expedition called out, and did he, like so many thousand Englishmen, leave his bones in Spain, to satisfy "Boney's" land-greed, or did he come back after "15," to repay his mother by his safety? His name is one well honoured in later years in English history.

And so we will close this picture of English life but eighty years since—a time within the memory of many, but to the middle-aged of to-day and to the young a time of the dim past, when life was strangely different to the rush and struggle amidst which we now live. This diary and letters contain but trivial facts, but they help to give a quaint picture of village-life in 1800.

TO-MORROW.

"You'll come to-morrow then;" light words lightly said.

Gaily she waved her little hand, gaily he bared his head.

"You'll come to-morrow then," and the man on his errand went,
With a tender prayer on heart and lip, yet on his work intent.

The woman a moment lingered; "would he turn for a parting look?"

Then with half a smile and half a sigh, her household burthen took.

"You'll come to-morrow then," and when the morrow broke,

Pale lips in the crowded city, of the "railway accident," spoke;

A strong man in a stranger's home, in death's dread quiet lay,

And a woman sobbed a full heart out in a cottage a mile away.

So lightly our thoughts leap onward, so lightly we hope and plan,

While fate waits grimly by and smiles, to watch her plaything—man—

Discounting the dim strange future, while his blind eyes cannot see,

What a single flying hour brings; where the next step may be.

And love floats laughing onward, and at his side
glides sorrow,
While men and women between them walk, and
say, "We'll meet to-morrow!"

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

LEICESTERSHIRE. PART II.

A WONDROUS change has taken place in Leicestershire since the days of Hugh Latimer. The yeomanry and the race of small squires have mostly disappeared as holders of the land, and in their place we have large estates, fine grass-farms, occupied by skilful cattle-breeders and horse-dealers; kennels, where hounds and huntmen are of the highest class; princely establishments, where all the mysteries of the art of venerie find distinguished adepts; a throng of fair women and well-mounted men to be found at every meet. All these things are associated with Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray—names which to readers of the florid school of sporting literature will call up visions of thoroughbred horses and huntmen in pink, impressions perhaps derived from the sketches of Leech or Phiz. Here, too, we find the dignified little mansions of the smaller squirearchy—such as you may see represented in the plates of that famous county history of Nicholls; houses square and solid, with their rudimentary wings, and their porticos and entablatures, the stables looking over the wall upon the smooth lawn, where the bob-tailed nag is waiting for his portly master—stables in good, solid, rustic stonework, with a little turret and a fox on the weather-vane, supported by curiously-twisted iron flourishes, and now let furnished for the hunting season, to some foreign princess, perhaps, or millionaire from the Antipodes.

But Market Harborough, which stands to Melton in the relation of Medina to Mecca to the faithful foxhunter, has a kind of history of its own, irrespective of hunting. We are told that its name was formerly written Herberburr-Buggedon. But this formidable title must not be taken too seriously. It was thus written at a date when spelling often ran wild, and, after all, only amounts to Hereburgh by Bowdon, for notwithstanding its dignity as a market-town, and its fine, handsome old church, Harborough is in essence but a hamlet of the latter parish. Hence its curiously contracted liberties, which extend only over the actual site of the town, a circumstance which gives rise to the old saying that "a

goose will eat all the grass that grows in Harborough field." The name of the place would lead one to expect to find a Danish camp in the neighbourhood, and a camp there is, which has the credit, however, of being Roman, but, as the predatory Danes often made use of the old Roman earth-works, probably enough the camp became known as the Hereburgh, from its occupation by the Danes. For in this connection we shall generally find the name of Harbour, which is plentifully scattered all over the country, with Cold Harbours almost innumerable, of all which our Market Harborough may be said to be the metropolitan city. But some say that the town is so called because it afforded harbourage to the king on his progresses north or southwards, and it certainly gave shelter to Charles just before the fatal battle of Naseby, while from here Cromwell wrote his triumphant letter, announcing the great victory, to the Speaker of the Long Parliament. Perhaps the modern repute of Market Harborough is a good deal owing to the famous fox-earths of the adjoining parish of Gumley, famous for the race of foxes stout and staunch, racy of the soil, as it were, which keep up the reputation of the Leicestershire foxes. In this last parish, too, is a fine reservoir, almost rising to the dignity of a lake, which supplies the Union Canal, its waters finding their way, as chance directs, into the Humber or the Severn.

Next to Gumley the village of Foxton seems actually to have taken its name from the animal so much venerated in the county. Then we have a little group of Langtons, five at least, with Church Langton at their head. This last recalls the memory of Parson Hanbury, a worthy of the last century, who, with sound views on the subject of planting trees, with which he clothed many of the bare heaths in the neighbourhood, entertained also sanguine and visionary projects which were to follow as the result of his operations. A college was to be founded, with an array of professors on liberal salaries; a cathedral that was to cast Lincoln in the shade; vast hospitals, where the ills of the flesh would find ready and gratuitous cure, and almshouses where the patients might pass their remaining days in rest and quietness. The parish, too, was to be the home of music and the arts. All the details of these various establishments were settled by the indefatigable Parson Hanbury, even to the minutiae of academical costume. Even the endowment fund of this great scheme was

not wanting, although, perhaps, it was a little inadequate in amount. Fifteen hundred pounds had been set aside by this amiable enthusiast, divided into parcels of a hundred pounds each, which, put out at compound interest, were eventually to provide for the various items of the scheme; one parcel for the college, one for the minster, and so on. Possibly this endowment is still existing, and accumulating according to its founder's directions, and the greatness of Church Langton may be approaching in the centuries that are to come.

Farther eastward in this pleasant, fertile land lies Hallaton, with its curious castle-hill, a conical mound one hundred and eighteen feet high, surrounded by formidable earthworks. The history of these remains is lost in the obscurity of the past. It is doubtful whether a feudal fortress ever occupied the site; and in all probability the tumult dates from much earlier than the feudal period. A curious observance, which long obtained in the village, may be in some remote way connected with its early history, and we may even see in it some vestige of ancient sacrificial rite—a view to which, perhaps, the name of the village, if we assume it to have originally been Hallowedtown, adds a little probability. It seems that the rent of a field at Hallaton had long been devoted—it is said, owing to the bequest of a former landowner—to the curious purpose of providing a certain number of hare-pies, with a corresponding quantity of jugs of ale, which on Easter Monday were carried to a certain place in the vicinity of the castle, and there put into a hole, to be scrambled for by the inhabitants generally. The rationalistic spirit of a later age suggested a change in the composition of the pies to the more commonplace veal-and-ham; but with this trifling innovation the practice was continued until recent days, and is perhaps going on still.

We are now on the borders of Rutland, where in a sequestered spot once stood the priory of Launde, founded in the twelfth century for black canons. At the dissolution the priory was given to Thomas Cromwell, Wolsey's successor in royal favour, who made use of the place as an occasional residence. Here is buried one of Cromwell's descendants. From this point we may trace the first beginning of the Cromwells in this part of England, enriched by the spoils of the abbeys; from whom the renowned Oliver sprung, by a Welshman who bore the familiar patronymic of

Williams, and who, on his marriage, assumed his wife's name of Cromwell.

Here the little streams flow towards the Welland, reminding us that we are on the verge of that great plain which stretches with hardly a break to the fens of Lincolnshire and the distant sea. But a little farther north, and the brooks run to join the Wreak, a feeder of the Soar and the Trent. Here upon the old highway to Nottingham lies a little hamlet, whose name, Burton Lazars, recalls its ancient unhappy reputation as the great lazaret-house of the kingdom, the chief of the many hospitals founded in England for the relief of the unhappy sufferers from leprosy—that mysterious scourge of the middle ages. A spring which rises here had a great reputation for the cure of leprosy, and still has some local fame for its efficacy in scorbutic complaints. "A leper used to be called a lazars," an old writer tells us, "from being full of sores, like Lazarus." The ceremonies observed on the occasion of declaring a man a leper, and cutting him off from social intercourse, were in the highest degree terrible and tragic. After a dismal mass in church, he was conducted to a solitary abode, far from all society, and was provided with a hood, a cloak, a sheepskin rug, a pair of clappers, a leathern girdle, and a birchen staff. The clappers were for giving notice of his approach, in order that people might get out of his way, and also as a notice to the charitable wayfarer that a fit object for his compassionate alms was at hand. The leper hospital at Burton was assisted by contributions from every part of England, but was chiefly supported by the powerful family of Mowbray.

It is a prevalent belief that leprosy was introduced into Europe by crusaders returning from the East, but this notion has been refuted by the researches of French archaeologists, who have shown that as early as the sixth century of the Christian era the number of lepers spread about in Gaul had attracted the attention of provincial councils. The Council of Orleans, held in the sixth century, imposed on the bishops the duty of visiting the lepers, and assisting them with the funds of the Church. That of Lyons, held in 563, also recommended them to the care of the Church. From that time many popes and bishops interested themselves in the condition of the lepers. And coming down to the twelfth century, we find our own Henry the Second, who had a kind

human heart with his many failings, very active in founding leper hospitals both in England and Normandy. Doubtless the King was a benefactor to this hospital at Burton, which was founded during his time.

The proud and ill-fated Mowbrays, who have left this one sweet memory of charity to the poor and afflicted, have given their name to the adjoining town of Melton; the metropolis, as we may call it, of fox-hunting, and the centre of a rich grass country, whose dairy products rival, and, perhaps, excel those of fertile Cheshire. A great part of the cheese known as Stilton comes from this neighbourhood—the cheese having, it is said, gained its first reputation from the landlord of The Bell Inn, at Stilton, in Huntingdon, who, being a Leicestershire man, was supplied with cheese from a famous dairy near Melton. The origin of the fame of Melton for raised pork-pies is more doubtful. The waste products of the dairies feed the pigs, and, as everybody knows, dairy-fed pork is the daintiest and best; but whence came the skilful pastrycook who first contrived those crisp, ornamental cases so delicious and so dyspeptic? It is said that Melton turns out more than a hundred and fifty tons of pork-pies each year—to furnish which a herd of three thousand pigs must squeak their last. A day's work or less for Chicago, someone may suggest; but then we must take quality and finish into consideration. Better a day of Melton, it may be said, than a cycle of Chicago.

Following the course of the river Wreak, which is also that of the railway between Melton and Lytton Junction, the traveller comes to the little station of Brookaby, and close by, where was once a village, but where now are only a gentleman's seat and a farmhouse, is the former home of the Villiers family. Here was born a younger son of a commonplace country baronet, the handsome, brilliant George Villiers, the spoilt child of fortune. His father, Sir George, married a second wife, Mary, daughter of Anthony Beaumont of Glenfield, of the "Beaumont and Fletcher" strain, and from his mother, no doubt, he derived that sweet disposition and those excellent gifts of nature, justly attributed to him by his contemporaries. A bright and beautiful boy, his mother's darling, but of no great account in his father's house, where there were elder brothers of the former marriage, naturally jealous and masterful, young George was sent to school at ten years old. "to one

Mr. Anthony Code, at Billesdon, in this county, where he also learned the grounds of music," and there remained till the death of his father, Sir George, when, being thirteen years old, his mother took him to her jointure house, at Goodby Maureward—or Marwood, in the spelling of to-day—a village a little to the north of Melton.

Whatever his faults, George Villiers was an affectionate son and brother. His mother, to whose singular affection and care he owed his good bringing up, was determined that her son's grace and beauty of person should want no advantages in the way of the fashionable culture of the day, and so young George was sent into France, where he learnt the language as well as riding, fencing, and dancing. He returned to his mother's roof when he was twenty-one or so, and after spending about a year at home, went up to London, where he hung about the Court for some time, his ambition then soaring no higher than one of the smaller offices about the Court might satisfy, with the hand of some wealthy citizen's daughter.

It was on one of the royal progresses that the King first took notice of the handsome youth, and at Apethorpe, in Northamptonshire, his majesty is said to have been much struck with him. And, again, when from his favourite hunting-seat at Royston, King James visited the scholars of Cambridge, who entertained him with a play called *Ignoramus*, George Villiers was among the players, distinguished by his noble person set off by all the advantages of rich attire. "Of all wise men living, the King was the most delighted and taken with handsome persons and fine cloaths." The reigning favourite, the infamous Carr, had brought the King into so much discredit from the crimes and intrigues with which he was mixed up, that the monarch's best friends were eager to advance the interests of a more respectable candidate. From his first introduction to James, Villiers advanced by leaps and bounds to the highest dignities—if dignities they could be called in such a connection. Appointed gentleman of the bed-chamber in 1615, he became successively Master of the Horse and High Admiral, Baron, Viscount, Earl, and Marquis, within a short two years; "the chiefest person in the realm, without dispute," disposing of all the honours and offices of the three kingdoms. In his prosperity, George Villiers did not forget his own connections. His mother was raised to the dignity of

Countess of Buckingham, and his own brothers were advanced to the peerage. His brothers of the half-blood, Buckingham seems to have left to their own rural dignities.

Once more old Sir George Villiers, of Leicestershire, makes his appearance on the scene, towards the close of his brilliant son's career. But this time he came in the shape of a warning ghost—an apparition as well authenticated as any such cases can be. The story is told by Lilley, the astrologer and almanack-writer, who was himself a Leicestershire man; but it is also reported by less suspicious witnesses. To an ancient country friend then, who happened to be at the time in London, appeared one night in a vision, the old Leicestershire baronet, in his antique doublet, with his grey, grizzled locks. The ghost adjured the country squire to seek out his son, George Villiers, and warn him that death was imminent unless he separated himself from his present companions. Our country squire, a little frightened at the vision, was still more alarmed next morning at the notion of seeking an interview with one so highly placed, and with such a foolish tale as his excuse; and so he very properly went about his business, and took no notice of the ghostly commission. But next night old Sir George appeared again, distressed and reproachful. Again he delivered his message, and besought his friend in moving terms to fail not to deliver it to his son. This time our squire was convinced of the good faith of the ghost. He sought out the Duke, always pleasant and accessible, and told the story of the twofold apparition.

The Duke—George Villiers was Duke of Buckingham by this time—was pleased and amused with the recital, but as sceptical and incredulous as any nineteenth-century professor of science, while he dismissed the bearer of news from the spirit-world with polite mockery, and our squire returned to his quarters mournfully convinced that all the ghostly warnings in the world would not keep a wilful man from his way. But a third night appeared old Sir George of Brooksbury (and the spectre's conformity with established rules as to ghosts, inspires a certain confidence in his genuineness), and the ghost, no longer reproachful, was more melancholy than ever. The spirit was aware of the mocking reception his message had received, but only let his good friend try once more, and this time he should go armed with a secret that should command belief. Here the ghostly voice sank to a

whisper, and what the secret might be has never transpired.

On this occasion the Duke was not so accessible as before; he would have nothing to say to the unfortunate old gentleman. But our squire caught him as he rode forth with a train of gentlemen, and gave him the message. The Duke, it is reported, turned pale. He acknowledged that what had just been told him was known to only one person living besides himself. But he was not to be turned from his purpose by anyone living or dead; and soon the dagger of Felton closed the Duke's career, and justified the ghostly warning.

All this was believed at the time, but it is only fair to say that rationalistic people suggested that the secret disclosed by the ghost was also known to Buckingham's mother, and that it was she who, ever anxious for his safety, and seeing the dangers that threatened him on all sides, had devised these means of giving her son an emphatic caution. But, after all, Buckingham was fortunate in his death, and in his tomb among Kings and Princes in Westminster Abbey. It was he, perhaps, more than anyone, who had caused that deep distrust of the Court and disgust at its doings, which culminated later on in the great civil war. And thus it may be said that in this quiet country nook of Brooksbury was hatched the cockatrice egg, whose issue destroyed the ancient monarchy of England.

Below the ancient abode of the Villiers family, the river Wreak loses its identity in the river Soar, and presently on the left bank rises Mount Sorrel, which is Mount Soar-hill, being analysed, and therefore tautological in its present form. The mount rises steeply to the height of a hundred feet, and was formerly crowned by a strong castle—a sort of robber's nest—like the smaller castles on the Rhine, but was destroyed utterly in the thirteenth century. There is something startling in the appearance of this bold rock among the quiet, pastoral scenery, and quarries of syenite and granite seem unconformable with grass-farms, and hunting fixtures.

Farther to the south, among a nest of hills that culminate at Mount Sorrel, lies Bradgate, with the ruins of the old manor-house of the Greys of Groby. Here was born the best known and most lamented of that family, Lady Jane Grey, the queen of a day, and unhappy sufferer for the ambition of less worthy people. Her father, Henry Grey, Marquis of Dorset, and afterwards Duke of Suffolk, had married Frances,

the eldest daughter of Charles Brandon, Earl of Suffolk, the cloth of frieze, who was matched with cloth of gold, in the person of Mary, the sister of his royal master, Henry, and the widow of Louis of France. An unhappy heritage it proved, this share in the blood royal bringing father and daughter to the block. After Henry Grey's death, although his property was confiscated to the crown, yet his Duchess enjoyed her life interest, and presently consoled herself for his loss by marrying her servant, or steward, Adrian Stocks. The Duchess's estates were extensive, both in Leicestershire and Warwickshire, and Stocks, a sharp, shrewd man, understood how to make hay while the sun shone; but excited the lasting displeasure of the Warwickshire folk by pulling down the church-tower known as the Lantern of Arden for the sake of its materials. One wonders whether Shakespeare, who must have heard a good deal of this grasping steward in his youth, had him in mind when he drew the character of Malvolio.

Then there is Rothly Temple close by, where once was a commandery of the Knights Templars, and in whose hall is kept the bed of Richard the Third, before alluded to as brought from Leicester. Lower down the river Soar lies Quorndon, whence the world-renowned Quorn hounds take their title. Quorn was once the seat of the man who may be called the father of English sport, the famous Hugo Meynell, "long esteemed the first fox-hunter in the kingdom." Up to Meynell's days the fox had been chiefly hunted as a noxious animal, by people who wanted to kill him; it was Meynell who set the example of preserving foxes, and of bringing together large fields of sportsmen to share his hospitality. The splendid entertainments given by Mr. Meynell to his friends, at the commencement of the hunting season, have hardly been outshone by modern masters of hounds. And we read that in 1791, on the first day of hunting, upwards of three hundred horsemen and ladies in carriages were assembled at cover side.

A little farther brings us to Loughborough, a sleek, comfortable, Quakerish-looking town—although not the resort of Quakers, as far as we know—and in the midst of a green and pleasant country which joins the town without any unpleasant border-land of slums; while a mixture of agriculture and quiet, leisurely trade seems

to complete the amalgamation of town and country—prosperous, slightly lethargic, and without any history to speak of.

A few miles beyond Loughborough we come to Dishley, noted in agricultural annals as the abode of one of the earliest scientific breeders of sheep and cattle, Farmer Bakewell, who, with his famous bull, Twopenny, and his sheep of the improved Dishley model, led the way in the art of building up improved varieties by a system of judicious selection. Bakewell was one of the earliest to practise the stall-feeding of cattle, and his farm was one of the first of model farms, while Bakewell himself, a broad, hearty yeoman, of the good old English breed, gave an hospitable welcome to all who came to criticise his improvements, and free advice and information to all who wanted to learn.

And now there is only left that fertile tract in the fork of the Soar and the Trent, where Castle Donington stands in stately magnificence, as if no evil fortune could possibly betide. And then, with Kegworth and its gypsum beds, we come to the river Trent again, and the limits of the county.

But there is one corner which we have not yet visited, where the upland wolds that rise gently from the basin of the river Wreak, break off suddenly in a steep edge overlooking the vale of Belvoir; and, at the extreme end of this edge, on a commanding brow overlooking the great plain watered by Trent and Witham, stands the noble castle of Belvoir.

A pleasant, happy valley this of Belvoir, and one wonders whether the beaver ever was at work here—as the name as pronounced would seem to signify, for the Norman spelling is probably comparatively modern—and if the lines of beaver-dams may be traced in the richness of the fields. But the castle is nearly all modern, done by Wyatt, and almost royal in its size and splendour. Contrast its present with its former state as quaintly given by Leland: "The Lord Ros toke King Henry the Sixth parte agayn King Edward; wherupon the Lord Roses lands stode as confiscate, King Edward prevailing; and Bellevoir Castle was given in keeping to the Lord Hastings; the which coming upon a tyme to peruse the ground, and to lye in the castel, was sodenly repellid by Mr. Harrington, a man of poure thereabout, and friend to the Lord Rose; wherupon the Lord Hastings, came thither another tyme with a stronge poure, and upon a raging wylle spoiled the castelle, defacing the rofes and

raking the leades of them wherewith they were all covirid. Then felle alle the castella to ruine; and the tymbre of the rofes unkeverid rotted away; and the soile betwene the waulles at the last grewe full of elders; and no habitation was there tyl that of late dayes the Eyrl of Rutland huth made it fairer than ever it was." In 1508 Edmund, Lord Ros, dying without issue, his sister Eleanor carried the estate into the Manners family of Etal in Northumberland. And thus arose the greatness of the present Dukes of Rutland—the holders of one of the few historic titles originally held by members of the royal line. The unhappy youth, the youngest son of York, who was killed by Clifford under the eyes of Margaret of Anjou, will be recalled as one of the bearers of the title. John Manners, the eighth Earl, was a zealous partisan of the Long Parliament, and fortified his castle against the King. Another John, the third son of the above, became ninth Earl of Rutland, and was an intense lover of a country life, and of his own native Belvoir. He would never appear at Court; but was created Marquis of Granby—a title once strangely popular as an hotel sign; The Markvis o' Granby at Dorking, the home of the elder Weller, although it has no real existence, will, perhaps, outlive in fame the memory of the ducal houses—and from Marquis of Granby was raised to be Duke of Rutland.

And here lies Rutland before us, that one almost expects to find a very land of Lilliput, with hills, streams, dwellings, farms, all framed to correspond with the size of the county. And so we enter upon Rutlandshire, if shire it can be called, with a feeling as if it were a terra incognita, hardly ever visited, and certainly never before described.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXIII. INFATUATION.

THEO and Gerald agreed that neither Ada nor Lady Redcliff should hear this wonderful news till the next day, after they had parted. At first Gerald declared that he could not go, and Theo thought she could not let him go; but by degrees she became quite sure that it was best for him to carry out his plan. He must take Ada back to England, break off his connection with Deerhurst, and move into

London lodgings for the present. If he stayed at Locarno another day, it would be impossible to keep the secret, and Theo felt that she would rather tell her grandmother after he was gone. There was no knowing what Lady Redcliff might say or do; she was sure at least to use plenty of hard words. Theo could not bear the thought of her attacking Gerald to his face; she did not doubt her own power of defending him when he was away.

As for the future, with its troubles of all kinds, which had weighed so heavily on Gerald as he walked up to the convent, he cared no more for it now. Circumstances might do their worst, now that the impossible had happened. Theo, in giving him herself, had given him the whole world. Never was a young man more wildly and romantically in love.

They had a long talk together in that shady corner of the loggia; but presently two or three people, tourists like themselves, came strolling up; a brown monk with his cowl pulled forward glided across the pavement into the church; all the bells of Locarno broke out at once with their clashing jingle. Theo remembered that Ada and Combe would be coming back, and sent Gerald down to the hotel.

They kept their own counsel wonderfully well that evening; nothing but their avoidance of each other could have made anyone suspect the truth. Theo was very silent, and Gerald in the highest spirits. He puzzled Ada a little; she would almost have thought him unfeeling, if she had seen any fault in him at all, for he did not seem inclined to listen much to her terrors and adventures. Lady Redcliff, too, was slightly surprised at the change in his tone; he told her very cheerfully that he was going to begin life over again.

The next morning Theo did not trouble herself much about concealment. She got up early, and went out for a walk alone; she was out an hour or more, and about half-past eight Mr. Fane came in with her; this fact was witnessed by Combe, who happened to be in the hall at the moment.

After breakfast, before she saw her grandmother, Theo went to the station with Gerald and Ada, taking Combe this time.

"Shall I see you again in England?" said Ada at the last.

"Yes, you will," Theo answered positively.

She kissed the child, and gave her hand to Gerald; they parted very quietly.

She was in no hurry to go back to the hotel, but took Combe away into the town. It was market-day, when Locarno is most characteristic. The low, dark arcades with their rows of shops were crowded; all the piazza was thronged with country-people and animals; men with thin, fine, agreeable faces; dark-eyed women and girls, some with bright handkerchiefs on their heads, those of a richer sort with black lace scarves and long gold earrings. The people sat and stood about among their lambs, and calves, and pigs—funny black pigs with long ears. The stalls were heaped with beads, and tools, and cow-bells, and sabots, and coloured stuffs, and cutlery, and flowers; here and there on the ground a woman sat beside a heap of gay handkerchiefs; red umbrellas were also displayed in all directions; a wandering pedlar was selling what he called silver rings for a few pence each; now and then a long, low cart drawn by mild-looking oxen came pressing slowly through the crowd; then came country-women with great baskets on their backs, smiling and nodding to each other. The sun shone, and the bells clanged out now and then. Theo stayed there for a long time; she liked the people with their sweet faces and pretty manners, and she amused herself and Combe by buying a good deal of rubbish. When they went back to the hotel, she took her purchases to her grandmother's room, but Lady Redcliff was snappish, and would not look at them.

"You ought to be an heiress," she said, "to throw money away like that. One of these days you will be glad of those shillings back again. What are you looking so happy about?" she said with a quick glance at Theo. "I expected you to be dismal, now that those dear people are gone. Perhaps you agree with me that they were rather a bore, after all."

"No," said Theo.

"The young man seemed perfectly happy last night," said Lady Redcliff. "I dare say he will fight along all right—much better than if you had persisted in throwing yourself at his head."

"I am engaged to Mr. Fane," said Theo.

"Oh, are you?" said her grandmother. "Pray let me congratulate you; your prospects are magnificent."

After this neither of them spoke for two

or three minutes. Theo stood looking out of the window; her cheeks were flushed, and she held her head very erect. Lady Redcliff sat crouched in her chair, making faces.

"Theo," she said at last, in a deep, angry voice, for she was in earnest now, "you don't really mean that you are such a terrible fool?"

"I am not a fool," said Theo.

"You are—a dozen fools. And a disobedient, ungrateful, deceitful young woman. As for the man——! How long has this been going on, may I ask? I know you have been idiotic about him for months; but I own I am surprised at his having the impudence to say anything to you. Do you actually mean that that good-for-nothing pauper has asked you to marry him?"

Lady Redcliff ended with a shiver of rage, as Theo, with brilliant eyes and cheeks, turned proudly to answer her.

"Why are you surprised?" she said. "Why shouldn't he? Do I care whether he has ten pounds a year or ten thousand?"

"You will care when you have ten children, fool, and when he is tired of you," snarled Lady Redcliff.

"I have not been deceitful," Theo went on, this piece of sound good sense being seemingly lost upon her. "You have known, grandmamma, almost all that I knew myself. You liked him; you made friends with him on the journey; and it was only yesterday he found me up there at the convent, quite by accident——"

"The convent! what an appropriate scene! Oh, accident! don't try to humbug me. Ah, and you went out and came in so innocently with Combe and the girl. Combe has been your confidante, I suppose. She shall go back to England this minute."

"Then I shall go too," said Theo.

"Why on earth didn't you go this morning? Why didn't you leave the girl with me and go off yourself with Mr. Gerald? I hate half-and-half people like you, who think themselves good because they keep just inside the proprieties. Don't I know you, Miss Theo? You need not look as if you would like to kill me."

Then came a little pause, for Lady Redcliff was out of breath with indignation.

"Haven't I warned you?" she went on. "Didn't I tell you that it would not do, and that I could not have it? I don't deny that I liked the man; he is rather taking; I can fancy a girl being in love with him. I was in love with his uncle ten times

more than you are with him, and he was ten times more worth it. Who are you, I should like to know, that you should have your own way when I had to give up mine?"

Theo was silent, and looked out of the window again.

"What do you mean to live on, pray?" asked her grandmother.

"There is my money, and he will find something to do," she answered in a low voice.

"A fine prospect!" sneered Lady Redcliff. "Look here now, Theo. You think I shall give in, but I sha'n't. You flatter yourself that I am fond of you. I am not fond enough of you, my dear, to let you ruin yourself. It is impossible for you to marry the brother of a swindler—who has swindled your own family, remember. And you might have some feeling for the Meynells, though they haven't much for you. How will they like your marrying a man who will have to sweep a crossing one of these days in rags, and will touch his hat to them for a penny?"

"My doings don't matter to them," said Theo; "and as for the other reason—if Uncle Henry knew, he would not want him and me to suffer for his brother's sins."

"You are perfectly unnatural," said Lady Redcliff. "You have no feeling left in you but an infatuation for this pauper, simply because he has handsome eyes, and looks at you. All women are alike. I suspect you made more love to him than he did to you."

Infatuated! Theo remembered Hugh's words, and for a moment she felt terribly lonely and sad. An infatuation was evidently a thing which separated one from all one's old friends. The next moment, thinking of Gerald, she reproached herself bitterly for that shadow of wavering. Was she not brave enough to give up everything, everybody, for him?

"I dare say he repents at this moment," said her grandmother, going off on a new tack. "Perhaps they are in the tunnel now, and, as he has nothing to look at, he is considering how he can feed you now he has got you. Perhaps he ascertained, though, that you were going to starve yourself and feed him. He is not the least selfish of his sex, that young man."

"You know nothing whatever about him, grandmamma," said Theo.

"I know that all young men are alike, and my experience among them has not

been small. Now, Theo, seriously, I will have no more of this nonsense. Sit down and write to him, or I will if you won't. Tell him that you feel you have made a mistake, and that I have convinced you by refusing my consent—for, after all, I have some diamonds."

The faint shadow of a smile crossed Theo's face as her grandmother spoke; it perhaps struck her that such arguments as this were too absurd to be noticed at all. Lady Redcliff probably felt the same, for after a minute's silence she suddenly changed the subject.

"There is a letter for you," she said, "sent on from London."

Theo went up to the table and took the letter. As she read it she smiled very sweetly, and seeming to forget her own affairs for the moment, she looked up quite naturally and said:

"It is from John Goodall. Nell has a son. I am so glad!"

"Sensible woman," said Lady Redcliff. "What fun for John; he was made to dance a baby."

Theo stood with the letter in her hand, and read it two or three times over.

"How happy Nell must be," she said half to herself.

It seemed possible to drop the subject of her own engagement, for Lady Redcliff had quieted down strangely; perhaps she saw that scolding Theo was an absolute waste of words. She watched her keenly, however, as she stood looking down at John's letter, and the set, grave, resolved look of her little pinched face did not bode much good for Gerald in the future.

"They must be two lumps of happiness," she said presently. "Don't you want to go and write to them? Pray send my love to the hair of all the pots."

Theo walked across to the door; there she stopped and turned round.

"I shall tell them," she said.

"Your own delightful news! Certainly, quite a charming exchange," said Lady Redcliff. "Theo," she called, as the door was closing, "where is Gerald Fane going when he gets to England?"

"To Deerhurst, to finish off his business there," Theo answered, a little startled by the question.

"Thank you, my dear," said Lady Redcliff amiably. "You can go. I don't want you," she added, as Theo lingered a moment at the door.

Theo went away to her own room. She wrote a friendly little note to John, and a

long, affectionate letter to Helen. It seemed quite necessary that her old friend, her first dear companion, who certainly loved her still, should hear all about her happiness. Of course, Helen would not be pleased at first, because of John's opinion; but they would both soon learn to know Gerald, and then it would be all right. Theo's heart was full of peace, for she was not really troubled by her grandmother's opposition, which seemed to have melted away. After all, even if Helen and John refused to sympathise, which was hardly possible, now that they were so happy themselves, their disapproval could not make any difference. And Theo told them that Gerald was going to Deerhurst, and hoped that John would see him while he was there. The only thought that really troubled her was the thought of Hugh. Who was to tell him? Theo longed a little to write herself, but could not make up her mind to that at once, after the parting they had had. And presently, after these letters were done, she forgot everything in writing her first letter to Gerald.

In the meanwhile, Lady Redeliff, alone in her room, was writing two letters, an unusual performance for her, who had no friends. They were both directed to the same corner of Staffordshire.

"DEAR MR. GOODALL, — Your wife's cousin, my granddaughter, Theodosia Maynell, has engaged herself to a young man called Gerald Fane, whom she first met at your wedding. Such a marriage is totally out of the question. You and your wife, two of the most sensible people I know, will agree with me, and will help me, if you can, to prevent this girl from committing suicide. If you see Mr. Fane, have the goodness to let him know what we think about it. I understand that you believe his brother to be little better than a swindler. The man himself is simply a beggar, and Theo shall not marry him. I was glad to hear of the birth of your son, and hope he is like his father.—Yours sincerely,
C. REDCLIFF."

"DEAR MR. FANE,—My granddaughter has just astounded me with the news of her engagement to you. In my days, a man did not ask a woman to marry him, unless he could offer her something besides the honour of belonging to himself. Pride and self-respect, of course, are gone out of fashion long ago: but I believe a young

man still likes a good dinner, and I do not see how that can be provided on three hundred a year, which no doubt you know is the amount of my granddaughter's fortune. You will excuse me for thinking that you would not have much else to depend upon. You will think me a cruel old woman for telling you that the marriage is impossible. As Theodosia will not believe me, I must ask you to write and tell her that I have convinced you. I am sure you do not know that your brother, Mr. Litton, having been trusted as a friend by Colonel North, who died last year, managed, by some supernatural cleverness, to relieve him of nearly all his fortune. This happened some years ago, and was hushed up by Colonel North's generosity; but there are people to be found who could tell you the whole story. Colonel North was Theodosia's uncle, her mother's brother, and, as you probably know, she lived with him till he died. I think you will feel with me that a marriage connection between your family and hers is almost impossible; at least, if you had known this story, I am sure you would never have asked her to marry you. I like your name, and you, and I am sorry; perhaps, too, it has been partly my fault. I know you will get over the disappointment, and be grateful to me some day, though at this moment you think me a spiteful demon. Pray write to her, and put an end to this thing, as soon as possible. Please yourself about mentioning my interference.—Yours very sincerely,
C. REDCLIFF."

"That will touch Mr. Gerald, if I know the Fanes at all," muttered Lady Redeliff. "Not that I care a halfpenny myself about that old story—Henry North was a soft fool, and it was probably his own fault—but the starvation argument is no use with romantic young idiots like these. Poor boy—poor wretch! I shall have a fine scene with Theo, one of these days; but she has brought it all on herself, and I don't pity her in the least."

CHAPTER XXIV. THE OBSTACLE.

GERALD told the news to Ada on their journey home, and was not quite flattered by her extreme astonishment. That this child, knowing nothing of the world, should think his marriage with Miss Maynell almost an impossibility, was a wound to his dignity, and to his confidence in himself. Ada's remarks, full of incredulous delight, seemed to bring him

down to a region of fact, to tell him that that vision of the Sasso had been a deception and a dream. He was very nearly turning back on his journey, and rushing again to Locarno, just to verify it; but Ada was an obstacle to that; and he took her on to England, growing more absent and more irritable with every mile that separated him from Theo.

He took Ada to a quiet lodging in Kensington, which was kept by an old servant of their mother's, and after staying there for a day or two, left her in this good woman's care while he went down to Deerhurst. He had exchanged letters with Clarence, who was there already; various business matters had to be wound up before Gerald was free of his old post; his books and possessions were there, too, and must be packed and taken away. He now hoped to find work of some sort in England, and was determined to consult Clarence, who knew more than most people on the subject. Gerald did not much care what the work was, so that it was unconnected with Warren; but his hopes were not high now, as they had been at Locarno. Away from Theo, without even a letter, her inspiring influence had passed away for the time, leaving only a restlessness, which was a form of love, but wanted sadly the faith and hope which make love perfect.

Ada did him some good, when he wished her good-bye, by looking up into his face and saying:

"When people have got what they wanted most, are they always so discontented, Gerald?"

"Mind your own business; besides, I haven't got it," said Gerald.

"Then you don't believe in her as I do," said his little sister.

He only laughed, but those words sent him down to Deerhurst in a much better temper.

He arrived on a lovely spring afternoon, and walked across by a field-way from Mainley to the little village. The fresh green of the country was pleasant after the hurried travelling, and bustling London days. If there was a trail of smoke stealing across the soft white clouds and limpid pools of blue, there were also copses and hedgerows full of primroses, emerald hedges, oak-trees bursting into gold. As Gerald walked under the Scotch firs, along the top of his old hill, where lambs were racing, and came in sight of the orchard in its hollow, budding white and pink; of the

old white gables and irregular roofs overhung with ivy; he felt sorry that he must leave the house which he had so cheerfully prepared for Ada. The quaint, out-of-the-way, cottage-like building had a strong attraction for him. He had met Theo at the door, and she had once walked in the garden; the place seemed somehow connected with her.

He let himself in at the front door, and walked straight into the study. His brother was sitting there, smoking, and surrounded with papers. He looked up rather oddly at Gerald as he came in.

The young fellow looked particularly handsome and happy that afternoon. His eyes were bright; he held himself well, and had an air of adventurous courage and triumph about him. He looked as he used to look when he was a boy, and always got what he wanted. Clarence used to admire his young brother heartily in those days, and had laughed approvingly one day when some lady said that Gerald Fane's eyes could talk all languages; but he had hardly ever seen him look so since he left the army, and took to drudging for his daily bread. Thus he was startled at meeting the bold, bright fire in Gerald's eyes once more. They shook hands, and Gerald sat down, and they talked in a friendly manner for some time. Clarence asked about Ada, and about Gerald's plans, and told him that he hoped to stave off a quarrel with Warren, but he thought it very probable that Warren would insist on getting rid of this Deerhurst concern, which wanted more attention than he could conveniently give it at present.

"Besides, the associations will be painful," said Clarence coolly. "The poor old chap was seriously fond of Ada, you know."

"Suppose we keep away from that subject," said Gerald.

"Very well; it is not a pleasant one for me. You want to talk about yourself; you want some advice, do you? Well, if you were not so desperately proud, I should advise you to look out for an heiress. You don't want work, my boy; you want money."

"Do you suppose an heiress would look at me?" said Gerald a little consciously.

"I think she might go that length," said Clarence.

"But she is out of the question," said Gerald. "About work: what do you think I had better do?"

"Go to the Colonies," answered Clarence

promptly. "There's nothing for you to do in England. Now I know some fellows who have just started a company in South Africa, to speculate in building at Kimberley, and one or two places of that kind. They want somebody to go and live out there, and manage their affairs. They will give him shares, and make him a director; that is how he will be paid. It is sure to answer; those places are growing every day."

"It sounds rather like Martin Chuzzlewit's Eden," said Gerald a little dismally.

"It is a *bonâ fide* concern, however," said Clarence; "and I think I could get you the appointment."

"Thanks; but I would much rather stay in England. In fact, I can't be banished to Africa."

"Very well; you have only to make up your mind. If we apply for this thing, it must be done at once, for I can tell you, plenty of fellows would be glad enough to jump at it. What on earth do you want to stay in England for? Ada? Well, you could find somebody to take charge of her. No danger of her being run off with again."

"Well," said Gerald, hesitating, "the fact is, you know—to tell you the truth, I'm engaged to be married."

Clarence stared at him with an astonished smile, and whistled.

"What girl has made such a goose of herself? Not—no, come, that is impossible!"

Gerald nodded. It did seem impossible. Clarence's surprise was certainly the most natural thing in the world.

"By Jove! But what does her grandmother say?"

Gerald did not trouble himself to answer this question, for just then his eyes fell upon two foreign letters, standing on the chimney-piece. He got up and seized them.

"Ah, I might have guessed," said Clarence. "Look here, Gerald," and his face took its hardest expression, "I think this is a pity; but you don't want my opinion. I have only to say that I don't like these people, and they are nothing to me. If you belong to them henceforth, good-bye to you. If Miss Meynell means to marry you, her people can find work for you, or bread without work, better still. But mark my words, that old woman will put a spoke in your wheel."

"Lady Redcliff has been very good to me," said Gerald.

"Has she?" said Clarence with a sneer.

Gerald said no more to him then. He pocketed his letters, and strolled off into the garden. Down there, a long old-fashioned walk ran under a tall hedge, with a bank where primroses of all colours grew in clumps, and dark blue gentians, crown-imperial lilies, wallflowers scenting the air, bright anemones and twenty other flowers. There grew the tree which had given Theo her rose last autumn, with plenty of other bushes, no roses on them now. But the old garden, especially this long walk, was full of gay colours and pleasant scents; there were fruit-trees and shrubs in blossom; and the soft, blue, hazy distance, stretching far beyond the garden hedge, had all the magic tints and fairy touches of spring.

Alone down there, away from everybody but the birds, who were singing all round him, Gerald read Theo's letter, and knew that this strange, passionate happiness was not a dream after all. By-and-by, slowly and carelessly, he opened Lady Redcliff's.

A few minutes later, Clarence looked up from his papers to see a white, stern young man standing over him, and to have a letter thrown down before him, with the hoarse question:

"What does this mean?"

He saw instantly, at one glance, what the letter contained. He kept himself very quiet, with a sort of smile, and read it patiently from beginning to end; his smile was a little broader at the opening sentences, but died away at the part that concerned himself. When he had finished, he pushed the letter from him and took up his pen again; for a minute or two there was dead silence in the dark little study, where Gerald stood looking down at his brother, who had brought him up, and had loved him, and had been his evil genius all along.

"What does it mean?" he said again.

"Answer me, will you?"

"You believe that false old woman against me? Well, I suppose it's natural," said Clarence, without looking up.

"I said nothing of the kind," said Gerald. "If you will tell me it is false, I will tell her so." Then, after another painful pause, he added: "For Heaven's sake, say it is false, Clarence!"

"I wish I could, old boy," Clarence answered, with real regret in his voice. "But it's no use denying what can so easily be proved. Well, it was an awkward business, certainly, and I did not

want it to come to your ears. I shall be sorry if Ada hears of it. However, these things follow one up, and find one out, as they say. Sit down, and I'll tell you, if you care to know."

Gerald sat down by the table, leaning his head on his hands.

"As it was—if I was to know it," he muttered, "why didn't I know it months ago?"

"Ah, pity you didn't," said Clarence quietly. "Now you understand what that young North meant by his manner to me."

"I understand everything now," said Gerald. He leaned forward, holding his head between his hands. "Does she know—does she know?" he was saying to himself, but there was no answer. Theo was so unlike other women, it was possible that she might know. If she could give herself to him, after he had told her of that terrible, unworthy temptation which had seized him in the autumn, she might, perhaps, think that Clarence's fault was not an impassable barrier between them. And yet the idea that she might know, might believe that he knew, was shame and torture to Gerald.

As he dashed up from the garden he had felt fiercely angry, and if his brother had laughed, or sneered, or taken the thing lightly, he could not have restrained himself at all; but now a hopeless misery had taken the place of anger, and he listened patiently in silence to Clarence's long explanation. He did not try to make out that there was any excuse for himself. Clarence had a good deal of bravado about him, and the facts he told Gerald were worse and more degrading than anything Hugh North had told Theo, and she—poor Theo!—had told her grandmother.

It seemed wonderful that Clarence Litton could have dared to keep his own name or to hold up his head at all in England. He did not deny that Colonel North had behaved very generously; he said also that he should have gone to the dogs altogether unless Warren had come forward and helped him.

"I am afraid," said Clarence deliberately, when he reached the end of his story, "that the poor old Colonel's rest would be rather troubled if he knew that

his favourite niece was going to marry my brother."

"But she is not," said Gerald.

Clarence looked at him in silence for a minute.

"You are going to obey the grandmother's orders?" he said presently. "Well, old fellow, I'm sorry—upon my honour, I am; but I believe it is the most prudent thing you can do. Under any circumstances, you see, the engagement was not very wise. If you are to marry at all, and not be dragged down, you ought to find a girl with money—which Miss Meynell has not, I believe."

"Don't!" said Gerald between his teeth.

"Well, I won't," said Clarence.

He lighted a cigar and leaned comfortably back in his chair, watching Gerald with a certain kindness. The poor boy was dreadfully cut up, he could see. It was natural, for Miss Meynell was a handsome girl, and did not always look so freezingly cold as when her eyes fell upon himself.

As for the shame and disgrace which were weighing so heavily on Gerald, Clarence had long ceased to be troubled by any feelings of that kind; and he did not feel any poignant remorse for being the cause of all this disappointment. Gerald, in his opinion, was a great fool to think of hampering himself with a wife at all.

Presently the young fellow looked up, very quiet and pale.

"What were you saying about that African affair?" he said, pulling some writing-paper towards him. "What is the man's address? Shall I write, or will you?"

"Suppose I do," said Clarence. "Comes in very handy as a resource. Nothing like new scenes. You are a sensible fellow."

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XLVL ARCHIE ALSO SURPASSES HIMSELF.

AFTER lunch Mrs. Tuck proposed as a distraction for herself and Ida a walk into the heart of the City. Mrs. Tuck was not given to walking, but she wished to see the shops and their prices. "We both want rousing a bit, my dear, and the bustle will do us good."

But the effect upon Ida of the ceaseless roar and roll of the great billows of life as they surged around her, deaf and cruel as the sea, was rather depressing than exhilarating. "The greater the city the deeper the solitude" is a proverb of many countries; for, of course, loneliness in a crowd is like the thirst of Tantalus. A vast river flowing past parched lips, which may not drink from it, is not a mockery merely, but also an aggravation of the torment of thirst.

Thus Ida was oppressed and almost appalled by the sepulchral loneliness of the vast crowd which swept past her in Fleet Street with sad, set faces. At last she came upon something that had for her the face of a friend. Her aunt had stopped to look at some large photographs in a window, and Ida's eyes wandered listlessly over them till she came to one which aroused and arrested her attention. It was a large photograph of that painting which had fascinated her in the Wolstenholme Exhibition—Sir Richard Steele's First Sorrow. It was associated now with the two great troubles of her life—her mother's death and her ill-starred love.

"I should like to get that," she said with sudden interest, to Mrs. Tuck's surprise.

"Which, dear? That coffin!" horrified by so morbid a taste.

"It's an old favourite of mine."

Mrs. Tuck wondered where and when she had seen it, but never thought of the exhibition and Archie. However, the girl must be humoured. Accordingly they entered the shop, but had to wait a minute before they could be attended to. The shopman was looking out a photograph for a gentleman, which he soon found and brought.

"This is it, sir. The one in the window is slightly soiled." It was the very photograph—Sir Richard Steele's First Sorrow.

"I should like it framed," he said, and Ida's heart seemed to stop, and the shop to whirl round.

She grasped Mrs. Tuck's arm, and turned to quit the shop. The shopman, thinking they were going in despair of being attended to, said:

"Excuse me, sir, one moment. What is it, madam?"

Archie turned, and stood face to face with them. He grew suddenly white, but was so far from looking conscious, guilty, and confused, that he faced them, scornful and defiant.

"I shall be back presently," he said to the shopman, as he raised his hat to the two ladies and quitted the shop.

His heart was hot within him, for, of course, Ida's insult in sending back his letter unopened seemed to him outrageous beyond all possibility of explanation or extenuation. And that she should now have surprised him ordering this photograph, plainly for its association with her, was bitterly mortifying to his pride. Hence the withering scorn of his glance at Ida. Against the evidence of that glance, the evidence even of her own eyes, even of his own writing, seemed at the moment weak to Ida. It

was absolutely and utterly impossible that the most consummate hypocrite in the world, if suddenly surprised as Archie was, could look outraged innocence to such perfection. Therefore, as Archie haughtily passed her to quit the shop, and she sank into a chair dizzy and faint, she felt wretchedly certain that she had wronged him past redemption.

Mrs. Tuck, seeing the state in which she was, bought the photograph for her, gave the address to which it was to be sent, and then turned to quit the shop with her. Ida rose and accompanied her mechanically for a few steps past the door, and then stopped suddenly to say :

"He never wrote it."

"But you saw yourself it was his writing, Ida," a little impatiently.

"There's some mistake. He can explain. I must see him."

"To be again imposed upon. You're so guileless, any one could impose on you."

"Then you will see him, Mrs. Tuck?" imploringly.

"What's the use? You will still believe in him, no matter what I think," with a suspicion of scorn for the girl's infatuation in her tone.

"No; if he cannot clear himself to you I shall never see him or speak of him again," with an earnestness that came of her certainty of his clearing himself.

Ida was so passionately eager, that there was nothing for it but to give way to her; and, after all, as there was no possibility of his explaining the letter away, no harm, but good rather, could come of the interview suggested. Ida would be satisfied then, and till then would disbelieve, or doubt, his duplicity. Therefore, after a moment's reflection, Mrs. Tuck said :

"Very well, dear, I shall ask him to call upon me this evening, though I doubt if he will. If you will walk slowly on I will return to the shop and wait for him there." Then seeing Ida look ill, she said : "You had better take a cab, dear."

And Ida, feeling her limbs tremble under her, and her head still dizzy, was fain to get into a passing hansom, and be driven back to the hotel.

Mrs. Tuck did what she could by her manner to bring about the fulfilment of her prophecy, that Archie would decline the interview, and she very nearly succeeded. She had to wait some minutes in the shop before Archie returned, and then she addressed him somewhat in the tone and style of a duellist offering a challenge.

"I waited to see you for a moment. Could you give me the favour of an interview this evening? We are staying at the Charing Cross Hotel."

Archie was about, with equal hauteur, to decline the honour on the plea of another engagement, when his eagerness to get at some explanation of Ida's conduct overcame his pride. He bowed coldly, and curtly asked :

"At what hour?"

"Six, if it will suit you."

He bowed again, and at once turned away to arrange with the shopman about the framing of the photograph.

Mrs. Tuck went uneasy away. Certainly his manner was that of a man conscious only of disgraceful ill-usage. What, if he really could, in some inconceivable way, explain the letter? Mrs. Tuck was now sorry that she had arranged for the interview. Suppose he cleared himself at this, the most inopportune moment possible—the moment of Dick's dismissal! Nothing then could prevent the reconciliation of the cousins—or their marriage! For Ida was just the kind of girl to think his very illegitimacy a reason for indemnifying him with her hand for the loss of his name and fortune. As for his protesting that it must separate him for ever, not from her only, but from England, it was a piece of clap-trap, which his lingering on at Heatherley, long after he was well enough to emigrate, itself contradicted.

Certainly, then, it was a rash thing to invite him to clear himself. However, he must clear himself to her satisfaction—very thoroughly indeed, that is—and she must keep him to the one point on which her case seemed secure. Did he, or did he not, write that letter? She must not allow him to excuse, explain, or palliate his writing it, as he might offer a hundred ingenious reasons of pity or of generosity for the indiscretion; no, she must not let him wander a hair's-breadth from the one point which seemed undisputable—the writing of the letter. If he admitted it, she would at once dismiss him and report the admission to Ida, as an admission (which it was virtually) of the resumption of his disgraceful relations with that woman. Most of us in a thousand things are as really, if not as consciously, insincere as Mrs. Tuck was in this matter. We push enquiry to a point where we think ourselves safe, but will not push it past that point, because, we say, all beyond is certain, because we feel all beyond is uncertain.

Mrs. Tuck, having planned the battle according to these Napoleonic tactics of flinging her whole force on the weak point of the foe, felt more reassured about the interview. She arrived in a cab at the hotel soon after Ida, and informed her that her cousin had assented to the interview after a good deal of hesitation. Unfortunately the infatuated Ida put the opposite construction on this hesitation to that which Mrs. Tuck meant to suggest—attributing it to Archie's sense, not of guilt, but of injury. It was not Mrs. Tuck's fault, however, if Ida took a hopeful view of the result of the meeting, for Mrs. Tuck spent a good part of an hour in putting the case against Archie as clearly as she possibly could. It was a kindness to prepare the girl for the worst.

Archie arrived punctually at six, and was received by Mrs. Tuck with a freezing reserve which did no little violence to her sense of hospitality. She was forced above all things to avoid a manner which might invite confidence.

"I have put you to the trouble to call, in order to give and to ask an explanation on behalf of Miss Luard." It will be remarked that Mrs. Tuck avoided calling Archie by any name, for she wouldn't call him "Mr. Guard," and couldn't bring herself to call him "Mr. Chown."

Archie simply bowed in answer to this preface.

"Miss Luard sent back a letter of yours unopened, and she wishes me to offer this explanation of the discourtesy," handing Archie his letter to Anastasia. "She now thinks the letter may possibly be a forgery, and she wishes me to ask you but one question, 'Is it your writing?'"

Archie looked at the letter, read it, and answered:

"Yes, I wrote it."

"Thank you; that is all we wished to know."

"But I wrote it——" began Archie, only to be at once interrupted by Mrs. Tuck, who feared all explanation or extenuation, though, of course, she had not the least idea of the one Archie was about to offer.

"Pray do not trouble to enter into details. The letter speaks for itself. We have no wish to pry into your private affairs."

"So I perceive!" cried Archie in bitter scorn and sarcasm, glancing significantly at the letter, which he then tossed on the table, as he rose, bowed, and quitted the room.

He was wild and bewildered, and even

confounded with anger, surprise, and scorn. This was worse than his worst imagination. That Ida should stoop to the baseness of reading a letter not meant for her eye! It was inconceivable! Yet she avowed it shamelessly through this Mrs. Tuck! Nor was this the sole letter of his she had read; for, of course, Anastasia had sent her either the whole packet or a selection of the most damaging. Thus Archie inferred naturally, and indeed inevitably. He had no more suspicion that the letter was supposed to have been written yesterday, than Mrs. Tuck had of its having been written a year and a half since.

Therefore they parted with pretty much the same impression of each other's cynical shamelessness; for Archie confessed to having written the letter with as much composure as Mrs. Tuck confessed to having read it.

On Archie's abrupt departure Mrs. Tuck returned triumphant to Ida. Ida read her doom in her face.

"He wrote it!" she cried, as Mrs. Tuck entered her room.

"Wrote it! He glories in it. Anything more defiant or indecent than his manner in admitting it, I never saw."

Then Mrs. Tuck proceeded to speak of his avowal of the letter as an avowal of his engagement to Anastasia, leading Ida to understand—what was to herself a certain inference—that he had gloried explicitly in his relapse into the toils of that siren.

Such baseness, duplicity, effrontery in any man was hardly conceivable by Ida, but in Archie——! Could it be that his reason had given way? The fever, the excitement of the fire, and the successive shocks of one trouble upon another, were enough to overthrow any man's reason. At least this was a more probable explanation of his conduct than that the revival of Anastasia's influence should make him behave so strangely, so incomprehensibly.

"He's not himself!" she exclaimed at last, out of patience with Mrs. Tuck's long and bitter tirade against Archie.

Then Mrs. Tuck began almost to think that Ida's brain was getting unsettled. No rational creature could continue to believe in such a man after his own defiant avowal of his worthlessness. She, therefore, in her turn, was a little out of patience with Ida.

"I don't know who he is, and he hardly knows himself, I dare say," pointing this allusion to his illegitimacy with a sneer. "But I know you're well rid of him, and so is the country."

"Did he say he was going soon?" wistfully. Then Mrs. Tuck lost all patience with this continued interest in the scandalous cousin.

"I didn't ask him, Ida; for I couldn't have believed that you would ask me."

Having administered this snub with great severity, and asperity even, of voice and manner, Mrs. Tuck still further emphasised it by quitting the room.

FIVE ITALIAN STORIES.

THE BISHOP'S DINNER.

SINCE the reign of the Emperor Frederick the Second, few Italian lords have been so rich or so powerful as one known in his country as the Marquis de la Scala. He was one of the few men who are all through life the favourites of fortune, yet who know how to make good use of their honour and of their wealth. This nobleman was very generous in entertaining his friends and acquaintances, and one day a superb fête was announced as to be given by him shortly at his mansion in Verona. Great preparations were set on foot, and all tongues busied themselves in describing the grandeur of the coming banquet. Suddenly La Scala changed his mind for some unexplained reason, saying the fête would not take place at all. Many strangers had come to the town in readiness, and as the Marquis did not wish these to go away under the impression that he was mean, he loaded each one with presents, which in value would far more than make up to them for the expense of their journeys.

He forgot one person only, a man named Bergamino, and it was rumoured that this omission on the part of the nobleman had been voluntary; he did not know Bergamino, and therefore thought it needless to take the least trouble to please him.

Now Bergamino had undertaken this journey to Verona solely to assure himself if all the widely-spread reports of La Scala's great munificence were true. It was thus a most vexatious disappointment, the more so as he had been at great expense in lodging himself, his servants, and his horses, at the inn. Nevertheless, he remained where he was until he had spent all the money he had brought with him, and that being exhausted, he began to pay for his accommodation by selling his clothes. Three very rich dresses were in his trunks, for he had expected to need them when

he took part in the gay doings at the house of the Marquis. One of these had to be used to settle for what he owed, and it was not long ere the second was turned to similar account. The third would doubtless have followed, but that just at the time Bergamino had resolved on another way of getting out of his difficulty. Presenting himself to the Signor la Scala, when that gentleman was at dinner, he assumed a very sorrowful and abstracted air.

"What ails you?" cried the nobleman; "you seem unhappy. May I be allowed to hear the cause of your trouble?"

Bergamino had already decided what he should say, so he at once opened his lips.

"You doubtless have heard, my lord," said he, "of a celebrated grammarian named Primasso, who made the most excellent verses of any poet of his time. His talent for improvising on any subject, combined with his other rare abilities, secured him many friends; in fact, his praise was spread both far and near. The desire to increase the number of his acquaintances led Primasso to undertake a journey to Paris, but he appeared there in a humble guise, for his knowledge had not made him prosperous—great people rarely recompense real merit!"

"Arrived in the city, Primasso heard much concerning the Bishop of Cluny, who, after the Pope, was said to possess more wealth than any other prelate of the Church. Wondrous were the accounts of his magnificence, of the splendour of his table, and especially of the manner in which all were regaled who chose to visit him at the hour of dinner. Curious to see a rich man who was also generous, Primasso resolved to pay a visit to the good Bishop.

"It appeared that, just then, the prelate was residing in one of his country mansions not many miles away from the city; therefore, Primasso calculated that, by starting early, he should be able to get there in good time for dinner.

"Having studied the road, he made his arrangements for starting; but for fear lest he might lose his way and be delayed, he had the prudence to provide himself with three rolls, which would secure him against hunger. However, he found the distance easier to accomplish than he had expected, so he was at the Bishop's house somewhat in advance of the dinner-hour. Being at once admitted, he had time to look around him and to observe the grand preparations which were making. Pre-

sently, the governor of the household called out that dinner would shortly be served, and that the guests must place themselves at table. By chance, Primasso was seated exactly facing the door through which the prelate would presently pass to the banquet, and it was the custom that even the first course should not be served until he was himself seated. Suddenly the door opened and the Bishop was advancing, but his eye lighted on Primasso in his shabby garments, and a feeling of disgust took possession of him, though, by habit, he was the most charitable of men. Drawing back and closing the door sharply, he enquired of his servants who that person might be who was seated facing the door. No one knew; for Primasso was a perfect stranger to all. While the Bishop still lingered outside the dining-hall, this unwelcome guest of his began to feel hungry, so, drawing one of the rolls from his pocket, he set to work to eat it. Presently, a servant looked in to see if he were still in the same place. 'My lord,' said this one, returning to the bishop, 'not only is the man there, but he is eating some bread which he seems to have brought with him.' 'Let him eat his own bread,' was the reply, 'for certainly he will not taste of mine to-day.' Though he said this, the Bishop would not go so far as to order Primasso to retire, for he felt this would be too marked an incivility; nevertheless, he hoped the delay in serving the dinner might cause this man to depart unasked.

"Meanwhile, Primasso, having eaten one roll, began upon the second with excellent appetite. He had noticed the prelate's expression at the moment their eyes met, and he partly guessed what was intended when that reverend gentleman failed to reappear. Resolved to hold his ground, and quite indifferent to the impression he was making on those who were seated near, he drew the third roll from his pocket. The Bishop was told that Primasso continued eating, and made no attempt to depart, and, surprised at the man's pertinacity, he began to commune with himself after this manner: 'What unworthy suspicion has entered into my mind? Why do I feel such a contempt for a person of whom I know no harm? A hundred times I have admitted to my table every stranger who presented himself, without considering if he was poor or rich, a noble or a common person, a merchant or a pickpocket? I have been polite even to those whom I knew to be unworthy. I am ashamed of this repug-

nance to the man who has sought my hospitality, and as I have never experienced such a feeling towards the poor, it is very possible that this is really a person of importance.'

"With this conclusion reached, the prelate bade one of his men-servants ask the name of the unknown. The answer came back that it was Primasso, who desired to be a witness of the magnificent hospitality of which men spoke so much.

"His name was well known to the Bishop, who felt covered with confusion for the way in which he had acted towards one so worthy of a welcome. A splendid dinner was served at once, and when it ended, he commanded that a horse and a purse of gold should be presented to this learned scholar, who received moreover an invitation to dine whenever he pleased.

"Primasso was full of gratitude, and thanked his lordship heartily; then he started on the road back to Paris, this time on horseback, instead of trudging wearily on foot."

Bergamino here paused, for his story was ended.

The Marquis had listened in silence, and possessed quite enough penetration to understand why it had been told.

"My friend," he said with a smile, "you have chosen a very good way of making me know your necessity, your merit, and my own meanness. I own that towards you I have not maintained my character for generosity, but I now make amends by according you that which you have adroitly asked of me."

With this, the noble sent for some rich clothing as part of his gift; one of the best horses in his stable was placed at the disposal of Bergamino; and a purse of gold was dropped into his hand.

In addition to all this bounty, his debt at the inn was paid for him by La Scala's orders; therefore, his skill and courage resulted in his returning home a happy and contented man.

THE THREE RINGS.

SALADIN was so great and so valiant a man that by his merits he was raised to the throne of Babylon, and won the glory of many a conquest over both Christians and Saracens. As the Prince was engaged in many costly wars, and moreover was liberal in his expenditure, there came a time when he found his resources so exhausted that he was forced to look around him and consider what he had better do.

By-and-by Saladin remembered that in the town of Alexandria there dwelt a wealthy Jew named Melchisedech, who was accustomed to lend money at interest.

Melchisedech was an avaricious man, and not at all likely to produce such a sum as the King required; but the urgent need he was in determined Saladin to obtain it by force if necessary, therefore he devised a scheme by which he might get the Jew in his power, and sentence him to a fine that should be sufficient to meet the emergency.

So Melchisedech was summoned to the palace, and there received with much honour; presently he had an audience of the King, who spoke to him after this manner: "I have been told great things concerning your wisdom, and especially it is said you have a remarkable knowledge of spiritual subjects. I have sent for you, then, Melchisedech, that you may tell me this. Which of these three religions is the best and the true—that of the Jew, of the Mahomedan, or of the Christian?"

Now, this Jew was crafty, and he perceived that the king was laying a snare for him. If he gave a preference for any one of these religions, his vast wealth—if not his life also—would be the forfeit. Happily for him, he was not easily alarmed, and with wonderful presence of mind he thus made answer to Saladin:

"Sir, the subject on which you question me is beautiful, and of vast importance; but, in order that I may reply in a satisfactory manner, permit me to tell you a little story. I remember hearing—though I cannot say in what country it was—of a rich man, who, amongst other very valuable jewels, possessed a ring of great beauty and inestimable worth. Desiring that the treasure should be guarded suitably, this man devised the project of leaving it to his successors as a memorial of his opulence; therefore, he directed in his will that the son who, at the time of his death, should be found in possession of the ring, might be regarded as his heir, and held in consideration by all the family. The son who thus inherited the costly jewel bequeathed it in much the same terms to his successors, and thus it passed from generation to generation. At length it fell into the hands of a man who was the father of three boys. Each one of these was amiable and excellent, each was submissive to his parent's will, and his love for them was equal. Now, this good man became much perplexed as to how he ought to leave his treasure, for he

loved his sons well, and would gladly have made the three equally happy. He could not single out one son for his good qualities, because all were alike virtuous; thus was it that he devised a method of getting out of a difficulty, for it must be owned that in a moment of weakness he had promised the ring to each of the three young men. Secretly applying to a goldsmith, he had two rings made so perfectly resembling the heirloom, that even he himself could not distinguish the false from the true. The sons received then a ring apiece, and—as may be supposed—this was the ground of bitter contestation as soon as the father died. Each one declared that the rights of succession were his; each one expected to be regarded as the head of the family; each one produced his ring as a proof of his heritage. It was, however, impossible to know the real and the false jewels apart, and a legal process was begun to establish the true succession. This process is so full of intricacy, and so many questions are involved in it, that it is going on to the present day and without any hope of being satisfactorily ended.

"That, my lord, is the story," said the Jew in conclusion; "and as with the ring, so is it with the laws which the Almighty has given to three different people. Each believes that with them is the right of inheritance, each considers that they have the true law, and obey the only true commandments. It is not yet decided which of the three is nearest to the truth, and to all appearance it never will be."

Saladin perceived that the Jew was too wily for him, and he admired the skill with which he had avoided the trap set for him. It would be useless to manoeuvre further with a man like this, therefore the king told him of his pressing need of money, and frankly asked for the loan. He was candid enough also to confess what his purpose was if the reply to his question had been less discreet.

Touched by the generosity of this avowal, the Jew was moved to a good will unusual to his character, and produced the large sum which Saladin required. That monarch not only repaid him the money, but made him many gifts and kept him near to his own royal person, treating him with respect and with a real friendship as long as he lived.

HOW AVARICE WAS CURED.

IN olden times there was a merchant of Genoa who had made a handsome fortune,

but because of his niggardliness his own name of Ermino de Grimaldi was almost forgotten, and men knew him best as Ermino the Miser. No one in that part of Italy had such riches, yet no one so grudged every penny he was forced to spend. You may be sure then that he kept his purse-strings tightly drawn if any appeal for charity came his way—indeed, he had such a dread of the smallest outlay that he scarce afforded himself the commonest necessities of life.

While, by a thousand mean economies, then, Ermino increased his possessions, he became more and more disliked and despised by his acquaintances. There arrived after a time at Genoa, a French courtier by name Guillaume Boursier. He was of upright and honourable character, generous and affable in his dealings, and with a charming manner of address.

Men of his rank were then in the habit of occupying themselves very much in making peace when families were divided, in promoting suitable alliances, in binding people together in the bonds of friendship. They made it a habit to cultivate a cheerful manner, that, as they mixed with the world, they might enliven others of a more gloomy and morose nature, and give new hope to those who had lost heart and courage under pressure of misfortune.

Guillaume Boursier, therefore, was a welcome visitor to Genoa. He was honoured and fêted by men of all conditions, and thus he frequently had to hear of the failings of Ermino the Miser. It is needless to say that no invitation and no courtesy came to the gallant French gentleman from the avaricious merchant, yet Boursier had a great desire to meet with and talk to him. He therefore paid an unsought visit to Ermino, who having at least kept some remains of good manners, received his guest politely. Encouraged by this favourable beginning, Boursier made himself as pleasant as he could, talking so ably upon different subjects, that at last Ermino took him and one or two more to see a fine new mansion he had lately had erected. "Sir," said he, turning to the French courtier, "you have travelled much, and seen, as it seems to me, everything there is to behold. Can you name to me one single thing which no living creature has seen, and which I can have painted for the ornament of my banqueting-hall?"

There appeared to Boursier something so positively absurd in the question, that he answered it in similar fashion. "If you

were to order an artist to paint you a sneeze, that certainly is a thing which man has not seen, nor ever will see. Seriously, though," he continued, "if you really wish me to give you a suggestion, I should say paint something which I will indicate, but which, I am sure, is not known to you."

"You will be doing me a vast favour," replied Ermino. "Pray tell me what is the subject upon which I shall set an artist to work?"

"Well, then," replied Boursier, "let him execute a painting of liberality."

Ermino stood in silent shame, for he comprehended the reproof, and knew not what to say in his own extenuation. Then, with a rapid resolve to change his ways, and become as generous as other men, he cried: "Sir, I am glad you have given me such an answer. 'Tis true that hitherto I have not understood what liberality is, but now I will have that virtue so set forth upon my walls, that neither you nor any other person shall be able in future to address to me a like reproach."

It is said that from that day Ermino was a changed man. No one in Genoa could be more kind and charitable, no one was so open-hearted in hospitality to strangers; the poor blessed him, the rich respected him, and his old title of "miser" became a thing of the past.

CORRADO'S COOK.

SIGNOR CORRADO was one of the wealthiest citizens of Florence, nor did he spend his money grudgingly. There were few pleasures that he denied himself, but it must also be confessed that he was liberal to his friends and benevolent to the poor. A number of dogs he had, which followed him in his rides about the country, or bore him company at the chase.

One day Signor Corrado returned from his favourite sport with a fine fat crane, which he sent at once to the kitchen, with an order for it to be well roasted, and served for that evening's repast.

We must now explain that Quinquibio, the cook, was a stupid, simple sort of being, held in ridicule among the other servants, though he well understood his own business.

He took the crane, and set about preparing it according to the signor's commands, and by-and-by a most delicious odour ascended from the kitchen. The bird was just upon the point of being sufficiently cooked, when a woman of those parts, who

was very friendly with Quinquibio, came into the kitchen.

"Here is, indeed, something excellent a-roasting," cried she. "I must really taste it, for never in my life did I smell a bird half so good to eat as this must be. Give me just a leg and a wing, Quinquibio; no one will be any the wiser; and there will remain quite enough to send up for the master's supper."

The cook shook his head.

"No, no, Madame Brunetta," said he. "You will get not even a taste of roasted crane from me."

"You will find it to your advantage to do what I ask you," answered the woman in an angry voice. "If you do not, I promise you that I will find a revenge of which you little dream."

After a few words of argument, Quinquibio's scruples were overcome.

"At least there can be small harm done by yielding to her," said he within himself; "and if I refuse, there is no knowing what bad trick she may play on me. I do not want a woman for my enemy."

So the joints were cut from the roasted crane, and Brunetta soon made an end of them, declaring them excellent.

Now it so happened that Corrado had several friends to sup with him that night; indeed, it was a large and a merry party which gathered round the table.

The crane was sent up with one wing and one leg missing, and the cook felt no uneasiness about the matter, for he judged that his master would have no time to notice such a trifling thing.

Unluckily, however, one of the guests observed that the crane had but one leg and one wing, and, thinking it somewhat strange, he took the opportunity of asking Corrado how it was.

"One wing and one leg!" cried the host, and looking closer he saw that his guest was right. "Send the cook here," he said to the servants who waited at table. "I must know what that foolish fellow means, for very sure I am that the crane had his two wings and two legs when I brought him home this morning."

When Quinquibio heard that he was summoned to the supper-room he was desperately frightened.

"Oh, woe for me," cried he, "that ever I suffered Brunetta to enter my kitchen!"

But no excuse could avail him now to escape from close questioning, and the trembling man stood before his master with a sinking heart.

He was, however, a Venetian, and 'tis said that a Venetian never shrinks from any lie that will serve his turn. Quinquibio assured the company, then, that there was nothing at all to be surprised at; a crane never had more than one leg and one wing.

Now this obstinacy roused Signor Corrado's anger, but as his friends were shouting with laughter, and it was not the moment for reproving a servant, he had to content himself with saying but little.

"Begone, rascal!" he exclaimed, turning his flashing eyes full upon the cook. "And, as you are so mighty clever, you shall e'en go out with me to-morrow, and show me some of your wonderful one-legged cranes. It will be the worse for you if you are not able to point them out, let me tell you."

Quinquibio retired to the kitchen well-pleased with himself.

"Methinks I got out of the difficulty rather cleverly," he reflected. "The master was very angry, certainly; but by to-morrow he will have forgotten all about the matter."

But it so happened that Corrado was very far from letting the subject of the crane slip from his mind; it caused him rather a restless night, and he rose at break of day, determined to clear up the mystery and punish his cook severely for his audacity. Calling for his horse to be saddled and bridled, he forced Quinquibio to mount another and ride behind him towards the stream, on the bank of which he had taken the crane that had figured so remarkably on the supper-table.

"We shall see," said he as they went along. "We shall soon see if you are right or wrong, my fine fellow."

The Venetian perceived that he was indeed in a difficult case, and that his master was far too angry to accept any excuse he could make, or to pardon him if he confessed what he had done. He looked around him to see if there was any chance of escape; but Corrado kept a sharp eye on him, and would not suffer him to lag behind so much as a yard or two.

Every object they passed seemed to his excited fancy to be a crane well poised on two legs; what then could he find to say to his infuriated master?

But as they reined in their horses at the stream, Quinquibio was the first to observe several cranes there, and each was standing on one leg.

"See, master," he cried in great glee, "it is just as I told you yesterday, and you

would not believe me. Look for yourself—the cranes have only one leg and one wing apiece.”

“You stupid idiot,” shouted Corrado, “I will soon show you whether they have two legs or not,” and then he cried: “Houp, houp—holloa!” so lustily that, as might be supposed, the frightened birds stretched forth both legs, and ran away out of sight and hearing.

“Now tell me,” said the master, turning sharply on his servant, “do your eyes serve you? or are you blind, as well as stupid? What have you to say for yourself now—have the cranes one leg or two?”

“Sir,” answered Quinquibio humbly, but bethinking him of an answer which might turn the current of Corrado’s wrath, “you did not cry, ‘Houp, houp—holloa!’ at the crane last night. If you had done this, who knows but it might have put its other leg to the ground and run away, as these have done!”

This reply amused Signor Corrado vastly, and he burst into a fit of hearty laughter.

“In truth you are not such a simpleton as men think you,” said he; “for you know how to get out of a difficulty by the help of a ready tongue. There, I forgive you this time; but let there be no more tricks played with my supper.”

Thus, by his ready wit, Quinquibio kept his place in Corrado’s kitchen, and from that time was better thought of, not only by his master, but by his fellow-servants.

APPEARANCES ARE DECEITFUL.

THE Signor de Rabata could not have been called a handsome man, even by his dearest friends. He was small and misformed; he had a flat face, and a nose much like that of a terrier-dog. In a word, this gentleman was so hideous that, search as one might, it would have been impossible to find one worse-favoured, except, perhaps, in the person of the famous painter, Giotto, who, at all events, was scarcely less ugly.

Despite this unattractive appearance, the Signor de Rabata was a very learned person, and was respected by the scholars of the day as the greatest judge on every point of civil law.

These two men—the ugly judge and the ugly artist—lived in the same village, not far from Florence, at the time of my story.

One day, as they were riding in company thence to the city, each being badly mounted and shabbily attired, they were surprised by a heavy rain, which forced them to seek

shelter in a peasant’s hut. The downpour continuing, the friends grew impatient. Therefore, as they knew the man beneath whose roof they were sheltering, they borrowed some clothing of him. He could only offer an old rough cloak of grey felt, and a very bad and ragged hat, which, however, the gentlemen accepted. Thus equipped, they continued their way. After a while, the storm abated, and they fell into conversation. Giotto talked extremely well, no matter what might be the subject, and, as Signor de Rabata listened, he reflected that this was indeed a gifted man. Nevertheless, as he surveyed the painter from head to foot, his ugliness in the borrowed clothing was so striking that he could not refrain from bursting into a loud laugh. Feeling obliged to explain, he said:

“Master Giotto, imagine if anyone met us who had never seen or heard of you. Think you that such an one would take you for the greatest painter in the world?”

“Yes, sir,” replied Giotto promptly. “I think this might be possible, if the same person, in examining you from top to toe, was able to credit you with knowing more than the letters of the alphabet.”

The judge was confounded, for, in ridiculing his companion, he had not realised that his own aspect was equally absurd.

“I was imprudent,” said he humbly. “You have taught me now that one must never ridicule others when one can oneself furnish abundant matter for ridicule also.”

SPRING-HEELLED JACK.

It is now nearly half a century since the inhabitants of London and its suburbs were kept in a constant state of terror by a man, who, under various disguises, would suddenly appear before the unsuspecting pedestrian, and, after having nearly frightened the traveller out of his or her senses, would as suddenly disappear with terrible bounds, leaving the impression upon his affrighted victim that his Satanic Majesty had condescended to pay him a visit in person. Evening was the time generally chosen by this eccentric character for his exploits, and, doubtless, there are many living who can recollect the pang of fear which shot through their hearts when, leaping from some dark corner, out of a doorway, or over a hedge, he stood before them.

Who this singular being was, or what the true object of his escapades, can only be

left to conjecture, as he was never captured; certain it is, that robbery was not the motive, for he was never known to take a single coin from his victims, even when fright had rendered them an easy prey, nor did he often practise any other degree of cruelty beyond scaring them, which, however, was quite sufficient, as in some instances the sufferers never thoroughly recovered the shock to their nerves.

The only surmise as to his identity that was ever hazarded, was that he was the Marquis of Waterford—then famous as a ringleader in all that savoured of fun and frolic—but not a shadow of proof could be ever adduced in support of this theory. The more general belief appears to have been that there were several persons concerned in the affair; that they were members of high families, and that the cause of their pranks was a bet of three thousand pounds that they would procure the death of not less than thirty human beings, apportioning them with nice discrimination as follows: eight old bachelors, ten old maids, and six lady's-maids, and as many servant-girls as they could, trusting that by depriving them of their reason they would accelerate their deaths. This is, of course, incredible, but the chief clerk of the Mansion House police-court, in a letter to the newspapers, said it was so reported to a committee that was formed by the Lord Mayor for the purpose of tracking and prosecuting the scoundrels.

It is difficult to assign the exact locality which gave birth to this extraordinary freak, either side of the Thames claiming the distinction; some averring that it was at Hammersmith, others again that it was Barnes. The most trustworthy accounts give the palm to the latter village.

It was in the latter end of 1837, at Barnes, that the ghost made its first appearance in the shape of a large white bull, attacking several persons, more particularly women, many of whom suffered most severely from the fright. At East Sheen, in the form of a white bear, the alleged spirit carried on similar gambols. His ghostship then extended his operations to the town renowned for "maids of honour," and in the course of a few days all Richmond was aghast at the tales of women being frightened to death and of children being torn to pieces by him. The search after the unearthly visitant was here becoming too warm for him, and he shifted the scene of his labours to Ham, Kingston, and Hampton, at which latter

place he was seen, clad in armour of brass, with spring shoes, and large claw-like gloves, but being hotly pursued he scaled the walls of Bushey Park and vanished. Teddington, Twickenham, and Hounslow, all had stories to tell of his appearance, and in Sion Park, the seat of the Duke of Northumberland, many and fearful were the injuries said to have been inflicted by him. At Isleworth a carpenter was seized at eleven o'clock at night, and most unmercifully beaten by the ghost, who was attired in polished steel armour, with red shoes, etc. It must be noted what an exceedingly varied wardrobe this sprite must have had, rendering it very difficult, one would think, for him to move, with such extensive properties, with alacrity from place to place.

The neighbourhood of Uxbridge was the next scene of his pranks, and he approached the metropolis through Hanwell, Brentford, and Ealing, in which last place he was seen in steel armour, striking terror into the inmates of the various schools located there, and frightening the blacksmith of the village so completely as to force him to keep his bed in consequence of the shock he sustained. At Hammersmith he found a determined opponent in the shape of a valorous laundress, to whom he appeared in the form of an immense baboon, six feet high, with enormous eyes, and arms of an extensive length; and in strict keeping with his animal appearance, he grunted like an hyena. This courageous woman, after an ineffectual attempt to avoid her uncanny visitor, determined to give him battle, and flew at him with such fury that he was glad to give up the contest. Even the royal precincts of Kensington Palace did not escape from his visits, children having seen the unearthly being dancing by moonlight on the Palace Green, and ever and anon scaling the walls of the royal forcing-houses.

In consequence of the panic attending these exaggerated stories, the police had strict orders to investigate their truth, but were unable, in the majority of cases, to trace any person who had really seen the apparition. That there was mischief afoot, however, was clearly shown by the applications at the Mansion House and other police-courts for protection.

At Peckham he caused the greatest alarm (judging by a letter to the Lord Mayor, from a resident there), appearing in a new character, as a spectre, and scaring out of

her senses, amongst others, an unfortunate servant-girl who opened a door to him; and the writer also said that seven ladies had been reduced to the same unhappy state through fright at the awful apparition. Letters poured into the Mansion House from all parts of London, showing how universal was the terror which had been inspired by this masquerading miscreant. Several persons, more especially women, were injured bodily in many instances by the claws with which he appears to have armed his hands, and if one writer may be believed, several deaths on the south side of London had been caused by the shock his appearance had given. A letter from St. John's Wood stated that for a whole fortnight that neighbourhood had been favoured with Spring-heeled Jack's attentions; he sometimes appearing as a bear, and sometimes clad in mail. This correspondent asserted that the bet, which was supposed to be the cause of these pranks, was that the monster should kill six women in some given time.

That his appearance was calculated to upset even the stoutest-hearted must be admitted, for the Lord Mayor himself, though much inclined to be sceptical, acknowledged that he had been given to understand, on undoubted authority, that in the vicinity of Forest Hill, where he resided, one of the female servants of a gentleman who lived near his house had been terrified into fits by the sudden appearance of a figure clad in a bear's skin, which, upon being drawn aside, exhibited the human body, with long horns—emblematical of Satan himself—clad in a suit of mail.

The "ghost" did not disdain to avail himself of material means of conveyance occasionally, as is shown by a letter to the *Morning Herald*, January 16th, 1838, from "A Resident on Paddington Green," who stated that he had seen, close to his house, a figure clad in white, closely pursued by two men, and, after a smart chase, this matter-of-fact apparition jumped into a cabriolet, and was driven out of the reach of his would-be captors.

A Committee was formed at the Mansion House in January, 1838, for the purpose of receiving subscriptions, and to decide upon the best means of capturing this uneasy spirit, and of visiting it with the punishment which it so richly deserved.

In sending a donation of five pounds to the fund, a gentleman residing at Dulwich wrote that his daughter was lying in a very dangerous state, having been

nearly deprived of her senses by the sudden appearance of a figure enveloped in a white sheet and blue fire, which had met her on her return home from a friend's house; others equally testified to injuries received at the hands of the hobgoblin. A reward of ten pounds was offered for the apprehension of the heartless scoundrel, but unhappily it completely failed in its object, and the perpetrator of this ghastly "joke" continued to be at large.

Thinking, perhaps, that he had done as much harm as he desired in the other parts of London, for a whole month Spring-heeled Jack devoted himself to disturbing the peace of mind of the dwellers in the East End of the metropolis, the neighbourhood of Bow being particularly patronised by him. One gross outrage came before the police-magistrate at Lambeth Street, and caused considerable attention.

A young lady, named Alsop, living with her parents in the vicinity of Bow, stated that at about a quarter to nine o'clock on the evening of February 21, 1838, she heard a violent ringing at the front gate of the house, and on going to the door to see what was the cause, she saw a man standing outside, of whom she enquired what was the matter. The person instantly replied that he was a policeman, and said: "For God's sake bring me a light, for we have caught Spring-heeled Jack here in the lane." She returned into the house, and brought a candle and handed it to the man, who was enveloped in a large cloak. The instant she had done so, however, he threw off his outer garment, and applying the lighted candle to his breast, presented a most hideous and frightful appearance, and vomited forth a quantity of blue and white flame from his mouth, his eyes resembling red balls of fire. From the hasty glance which her fright enabled her to get at his person, she observed that he wore a large helmet, and his dress, which appeared to fit him very tight, seemed to her to resemble white oil-skin. Without uttering a sentence he darted at her, and catching her partly by her dress, and the back part of her neck, placed her head under one of his arms, and commenced tearing her clothes with his claws, which she was certain were made of some metallic substance. She screamed out as loud as she could for assistance, and by considerable exertion got away from him, and ran towards the house to get in. Her assailant, however, followed, and caught her on the doorstep, when he again used

considerable violence, tore her neck and arms with his claws, as well as a quantity of hair from her head; but she was at length rescued from him by one of her sisters. Her story was fully corroborated by her parents and sisters, and her injuries, which were very considerable, bore unmistakable testimony to the truth of the assault.

Subsequently in Bow Fair Fields Jack narrowly escaped capture by some workmen, and it was only by his extreme agility, and intimate knowledge of the locality, that he got clear off. Two men were arrested as being concerned in this affair—one a master-bricklayer, and the other a carpenter; but after a very long and searching investigation at Lambeth Street police-court, they were discharged, as they were not fully identified as being the actual perpetrators, though it was certain they knew something more about the matter than they chose to acknowledge.

Another sample of the ghost's playful ways in the East End of London, was shown by a statement made before the magistrate at Lambeth Street police-court, March 8, 1838, by a Miss Scales, who deposed that as she and her sister were walking in Limehouse about half-past eight in the evening, on coming to Green Dragon Alley they observed some person standing in an angle in the passage. She was in advance of her sister at the time, and just as she came up to the person, who was enveloped in a large cloak, he spirted a quantity of blue flame right in her face, which deprived her of her sight, and so alarmed her, that she instantly dropped to the ground and was seized with violent fits, which continued for several hours. This individual was described as tall, thin, and of gentlemanly appearance, and carried in front of him a small lamp, similar to those used by the police; he did not utter a word, nor did he attempt to lay hands on the young woman, but walked away in an instant.

Not confining himself to the crowded parts of the metropolis, he made the suburbs his hunting-ground, and terrorised both sides of the Thames to such an extent that but few females would venture out after dark without sufficient escort. He visited Blackheath in a truly novel and marvellous manner. Three ladies were crossing the heath at about six o'clock, when they suddenly came upon a monstrous figure before them, and as the lamps had been lit some time, they had a good view

of it. The monster, they said, had a phosphoric lustre, showed tremendous long ears, horns and tail like those of a bullock. One of the ladies fell down in a fit, and the other two had resort to that potent weapon in the female armoury, a good scream, which promptly brought a policeman to their assistance, and on his bold advance the apparition threw itself over his head and disappeared on the heath, during which gymnastic performance, it was said, the hooks, or springs, on his heels were distinctly visible.

In a pamphlet, published at the time, we have preserved to us a portrait of the "ghost," as he appeared in this instance, and the representation even, much less the reality, is quite enough to upset the nerves of any ordinary-minded person. He is depicted as clad in all the orthodox details of a satanic outfit, horns, tail, etc., with fearful claws on both hands and feet, the latter additionally armed with large hooks, attached to the heels, whilst his countenance puts any mediæval conception of the Evil One quite to the blush. No wonder, then, the ladies are shown as suffering an extremity of terror, with their mouths extended to their utmost capacity, presumably screaming.

In another tract there is a similar portrait of this man-fiend, its horrors being heightened by being highly-coloured, and there he is represented as appearing in a churchyard to two women.

In a third booklet he appears as in half-armour, with helmet, etc., his nether limbs being clad in a species of fox-hunting costume, a huge cloak adorning his back.

Having alarmed the dwellers on the south side of the Thames, so as nearly to deprive them of their senses, he again crossed the water, and appeared to a party of people near Holloway in the guise of a bear. Here, however, he met with a reception he hardly contemplated, for there being a brickfield handy, the men of the party treated him to a shower of bricks, a mode of treatment which he by no means relished, and which induced him to beat a speedy retreat.

One evening, near Lord Holland's gate at Kensington, a gaunt figure, accoutred like Don Quixote, and covered with spikes, was seen striding along the road, and, after staring in the faces of some labouring men, disappeared in an instant. These men, it is said, went into a beer-shop in the vicinity, and then relating what they had seen, they again went to the place

where the figure had appeared, in expectation of its return. However, they did not meet it, but they saw an uncouth monster, having the shape of an enormous baboon, playing its antics beneath some trees which overhung the road. As they approached the creature sprang up on the branches and disappeared, Spring-heeled Jack, of course, being credited with this mysterious occurrence.

Hackney was favoured with an extraordinary vision of this many-shaped intruder on the public peace, for he appeared, so the story runs, in the shape of a lamp-lighter walking on his head and hands, and carrying his ladder between his feet, to which was suspended a lantern of large dimensions, amply lighted. And this curious creature, on being approached, somersaulted so high, that those who saw it were utterly astonished. But this, surely, is rather more than even the most credulous ought to be expected to swallow, and the story must have been manufactured to feed the public taste for the marvellous.

Another glimpse of him was had on the road to Woolwich, when a blue flame issued from his mouth, and a girl who witnessed it fell into fits. His dress on this occasion is described as that of a gentleman, with the somewhat startling addition of a wide strip of scarlet down the back of his coat. Being pursued, he sprang over the fences as usual, and was out of sight in an instant. Still lingering in Kent, he was found the following night at Dartford, where he was clad in a bear-skin, and amused himself with the mischievous trick of putting out the town gas and leaving the streets in darkness. The ubiquity of the fellow was something wonderful, and tended, of course, very much to enhance his fame; no sooner was he heard of in Kent than he turned up at Hampstead Heath, springing over the furze-bushes and somersaulting over the gravel-pits.

So numerous were the tales told of Spring-heeled Jack that a good many must be supposed to be true; whilst, on the other hand, great allowance must be made for credulity, some people not being content with the marvellous as they find it, but being only too happy to add thereto. As a final specimen of the nonsense circulated about his appearance, perhaps the following is the best. A wonderful sight, it was said, was witnessed on Primrose Hill one evening. On the summit appeared a huge figure of a man, in a flame of pale blue;

it then assumed the bulk of a massive elephant, then of a windmill in full operation, and lastly, in lessening its dimensions, it became a large ball of snow, which rolled down the hill, and escaped further notice. What Spring-heeled Jack had to do with this dreadful appearance is not at all clear, but it was attributed to him, nevertheless, such was the hold that he had obtained over the public mind.

Whether too much attention was beginning to be paid to him with a view to his capture, or whether his love of mischief had died out, cannot be told, but certain it was that nothing was known publicly of this singular being after April, 1838, having kept London in a ferment of excitement and terror for about six months. The foregoing are only a few of the stories, veracious or otherwise, that were related of him, space not permitting any more detailed account to be given.

The notoriety this fellow had obtained seems to have had the effect of making many silly young men emulous to enact the ruffian in a small way, considering it the height of cleverness to frighten women and children out of their wits, under the belief that Spring-heeled Jack was attacking them. Many cowardly assaults on women were reported in various parts of the metropolis, under the impression, doubtless, that it was all a "lark;" but it was a joke the victims hardly appreciated, as, should they scream out in their terror, their unmanly assailants did not hesitate to strike them with their fists in the mouth, in order to silence them.

One of these imitators of Jack, a young footman, who had kept the inhabitants of Kilburn in considerable alarm by sallying out upon them disguised as a ghost, in a white sheet and hideous mask, from which depended a long beard, was captured and fined four pounds, which seems hardly an adequate sentence for the offence, seeing how seldom these gentry gave justice a chance of punishing them.

In a satirical paper, *The Age*, of March 11, 1838, is found a recipe for the cure of "spring-heels" in "Jacks": "Take of peas, pepper, salt, and gunpowder an equal amount. Fiat mixture in blunderbusii without scruple. Make application in the region of the 'os coccygis,' and let fly. We are happy in having the best opinion that no person afflicted with 'Spring-heeled Jackism' can withstand the effects of this treatment of his nervous system." Undoubtedly, if this pre-

scription had been followed extensively in its entirety by the inhabitants of London, there would not have been much more heard of the pranks of these cowardly fellows, whose only redeeming point was that they abstained from plundering those who had been weak enough to be frightened by their appearance.

OUR SHINING RIVER.

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NOTHING was ever seen like Paddington Station on that particular morning—businesslike Paddington, with its long rows of white railway-coaches continually gliding away to distant parts; with its platforms and their constantly-changing groups, and the great piles of luggage that accumulate as fast as they are wheeled away by busy porters. All this ordinary, workaday aspect of the familiar terminus is for the moment effaced. Wonderful toilettes of the whitest, the creamiest, the most refreshing; pretty faces under the most ravishing of hats, go to form a white and radiant cloud of womankind, which has invaded and taken possession of the scene. And instead of the usual sombre foil of masculine garments, we have all kinds of brilliant and startling arrangements of colour—in jerseys, and jumpers, and gay caps, and parti-coloured ribbons—combined with white flannels. Festive trains are freighted fast with all these festive people—the newest and brightest of saloon-carriages, each appropriated to some club or private party; and instead of brown portmanteaux and black bullock-trunks, we have baskets of flowers and fruits by way of luggage, with tempting-looking picnic-baskets, and bundles of white sunshades, or parti-coloured Japanese umbrellas.

All the gay crowd is moving to and fro with a perfectly distracting play of colour in the tempered sunshine that filters through the great glass roof. I am dazed, bewildered, and experience, also, a certain sadness in the thought that none of these bright and pleasing young women are looking out for me. Indeed, I had no share in the bright glances and pleasant recognitions, and thus it was a relief to be seized upon by an active porter, whose instinct of self-interest had kept him clear of the crowd of feminine passengers, for women, however costly their array, are generally more lavish of smiles and thanks than of shillings and half-crowns. "This

way, sir; here's your friend a-waiting for you. She's jest off, is the fast train, and she'll run afore these specials."

And so I found myself and my belongings shot into a smoking carriage as the train moved on, while opposite sat my friend Charlwood Pyecroft, generally known as Charley, who gripped my hand and arm with some fervour.

"You got my telegram, then, from Paris! So good of you to come."

The fact was, that I had got into the habit of being very much at Charley's beck and call, who was an erratic kind of being; often lost sight of for months, or years even, and then making known his existence in a peremptory way by telegraph, asking me, perhaps, to meet the Cunard boat at Queenstown, or to run over to Marseilles to join him in a yachting trip in the Mediterranean. Generally speaking, when Charley had recourse to me, he was in some kind of a scrape. And I guessed pretty confidently that something was the matter now, for beneath the superficial cheerfulness of his greeting there lurked a settled kind of gloom.

Poor Charley! he had been left to his own devices at an early age, with a nice little property, including a pleasant old mansion on the Thames, where his family had lived for generations in credit and good repute. How much was left for him now! Very little, I fancied, for already had appeared in the Times a preliminary announcement of the sale of Pyecroft Court, with all its lands and demesnes. Soon, no doubt, I should hear from Charley's own lips how it had happened that matters had come to this pass. In the meantime, we beguiled the way with ordinary conversation.

"What has brought you over from Paris in such a hurry?" I asked.

"Arthur, my boy," replied Charley gloomily, "it was baccarat. Had a cruel time of it. Lost fifty thousand francs to the marquis—cleared me out, and came home partly to see you."

"And partly to see somebody else," I interposed. "Oh, I have heard something about your affairs, although you have kept me so much in the dark."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Charley, flushing, and looking embarrassed; "you can't have heard anything about her——"

"About the little cousin who is to redeem the fortunes of young Prodigal? Yes, I have been told——"

"Oh, as for Claudia, everybody knows about that," said Charley, frowning; "that old donkey of an uncle of mine has been putting our names together all over the place. She is the bane of my existence, don't you see. I always associate her with a run of ill-luck at baccarat, or the wrong horse winning the Derby."

"The girl is something of a fright, then?" I hazarded, thinking that my friend's aversion to the match that would save him must have some sufficient reason.

"Well, not exactly a fright," replied Charley carelessly, "but a sallow, bread-and-butter kind of schoolgirl. Here, I've got her photograph. You can judge for yourself."

Mr. Pycroft produced a photograph from a handsome case, and handed it to me. The portrait was that of a young girl with large clear eyes, a forehead broad and low, the features perhaps hardly regular enough to be handsome, but the mouth mobile and sensitive, with the lips just parted and disclosing a set of firm, pearl-like teeth. Although there was the semblance of a smile on the face, yet the general expression of the features was rather of the pensive cast. Altogether the photograph gave the impression of a refined and sensitive girl, who was, perhaps, not over happy in her surroundings; or who might be regretting the absence or coldness of her lover. I looked at Charley to read in his face some explanation of this sorrowful air, but the young man at this moment had his whole attention fixed upon another portrait, at which he looked with rapt and passionate gaze. Becoming conscious that I was looking at him, he hastily put back the case into his pocket, forgetting his cousin's portrait, which last I placed in my own pocket.

Now if Mr. Pycroft considered his cousin to be the bane of his life, no doubt there was an antidote somewhere in existence. As to this surmise, which I presently expressed, Charley nodded a decisive affirmative.

"A girl," he said, "who suits me down to the ground. A jolly, sensible, true-hearted girl, who takes an interest in me, and in everything I like, except, by the way, in gambling, which she always sets her face against. Ah," added Charley with a sigh, "if I had taken her advice I should have been a different man now, and able to please myself. Whereas, behold me now, bound to the chariot-wheels of my uncle."

But then, why should Charley's uncle

object to his pleasing himself in the matter of his affections, and why also should he want to unite his daughter, a well-dowered young woman, to an impoverished young prodigal? Charley winced at this description of himself, but owned that it was not exactly unjust. As for his uncle's motives, they were not far to seek. He was not a real Pycroft, it seemed, but had married Charley's aunt, and assumed his wife's name. Thus he had become a bigoted devotee to the Pycroft creed, that the Pycrofts were the salt of the earth, and that no honours were like unto theirs. And with Uncle Pycroft's dollars the ancestral belongings of the family might soon be redeemed from the hands of the Jews, and Pycroft Court would resume its place among the grand houses of the county.

Charley admitted that he saw no other issue to the matter than to sacrifice himself and his cousin to the family interests.

"We shall be wretched together for a year or so, and then I shall fly back to my old ways, and after that——"

"Hanwell!" I remarked, looking out of the carriage-window as the train sped past a fine range of buildings with a mediæval gateway jealously closed with iron bars, all embowered among the luxuriant foliage.

"Yes, it will be Hanwell for one of us," rejoined Charley gloomily. And then he began to tell me of the plans he had lately formed. How he had by clever management—involving the sacrifice to his uncle of his remaining interest in the family estate—contrived to scrape together a few thousand pounds in ready money, with which he had intended to settle as a sheep-farmer in Australia, having first married his sweetheart, Rebecca Thomas. Rebecca had a little money of her own; her people being well-to-do if a trifle vulgar. Her father, a decent old fellow, had long kept the Crab and Flowerpot, a well-frequented hostelry on the river. There was a mother, jolly and good-natured, who was almost too fond of her presumptive son-in-law; a brother, too, whom Charley allowed to be objectionable. The old man had made money and retired, and now lived in his own little place not far from Uncle Pycroft's manor-house in Gloucestershire, and waged continual war with the squire as to fishing and riparian rights on the river; and thus, apart from all other considerations, was anything but a persona grata to the people at Charlwood Hall. Every year, however, Mr. Thomas contrived to

get afloat on his favourite River Thames, revisiting his old haunts and friends, and fishing and boating to his heart's content. Henley was always one of his stopping-places, where he moored his house-boat and entertained his old friends and customers with free hospitality, not without a discreet eye to business, for he had launches and house-boats of his own, that he would let on terms advantageous to himself as a matter of grace and favour.

But Rebecca, added Charley with a despairing sigh, although happy enough in her life at home, was sufficiently devoted to her lover to follow him to the end of the world. And she had entered into the Australian scheme with fervour—all had been settled between the pair—and then with all this money at command, Charley had thought no harm could come of a run to Paris by himself to take a parting glance at old haunts and associates. Then had followed the fatal baccarat, the final clearing out, and the consequent shipwreck of the Australian project. And Charley, who had promised to be at Henley to make final arrangements with Rebecca, was now on his way there to tell her that there was nothing left for him but to give her up and save himself from utter ruin by marrying the fated bane of his existence.

"I haven't the heart to break it to her myself," said Charley in a husky voice. "And I want you to do it for me, old chappie, as kindly and as gently as you can."

"Ah, there is Windsor Castle," I observed in a chilly voice, as over the green plain, with its groves and tufted hedges, rose the massive walls and towers of the royal fortress-palace, with England's standard floating lazily in the hazy sunshine from the great Round Tower. "Queen there, eh? I suppose she'll be going north before long."

"Never mind about Windsor Castle," said Charley, putting his hand persuasively upon my shoulder. "Say you'll do this for me, old fellow. No," he added, as he saw my repugnance to the task written plainly in my face. "Well, if anyone had told me that Arthur Penrice would desert an old friend in his need, I would have struck him, by Jove! and——"

Here we stopped at Slough, and a rush of people to the door of our carriage stopped the fervid flow of Charley's eloquence.

"Oh, I say," he went on, as somebody pulled vigorously at the door, which was difficult to open, "here is a thundering old

woman trying to get in. Madam," as the door opened, and a full-blown, elderly face appeared in the opening, "this is a smoking-carriage."

"Don't mind at all," said the new comer, hauling herself vigorously in. "Hi! Clara, plenty of room here," calling to her daughter, who was looking after the luggage. And then with a look of growing recognition on her ruddy face as she stared at my companion: "Surely I know that face, though I can't for the moment give it a name. Ah, how de do, Mr. Charlwood Pyecroft! I don't know you so well as the Charlwood Hall Pyecrofts; your uncle, I think. True, so they are. Clara," as the daughter entered the carriage rather breathless from her hurried visit to the luggage-van, a plain, sensible-looking young woman. "Clara, you know that face—Mr. Pyecroft, of course."

"Yes, I see," said Clara, nodding coolly to my companion. You could see that one of her missions in life was to moderate the exuberances of her too demonstrative mamma. "Going to Henley, I suppose? What a pity we did not think of Henley! Such a nuisance, all this crowd and bustle!"

"Well, we should not have seen Mr. Pyecroft otherwise," remarked the elder lady benevolently. "Oh, I have met Miss Pyecroft several times lately—grown a charming girl. Cousin, is it not? Am I to congratulate you? A little bird has whispered——"

"The little bird ought to be shot, Mrs. Boothby," replied Charlwood ungraciously.

"Perhaps it was only a prophetic bird, like the raven in the poem, that croaked 'Never more!'" cried Clara, with a shrewd glance towards Charley, who seemed to wince a little under the young woman's straightforward glance.

"My dear Clara," remonstrated the mother, "to talk of ravens and weddings in the same breath! Really, quite unlucky. But perhaps we shall meet again soon. We are promised at the Hall for certain festivities, I think, Clara. That is, if my rheumatism permits. Not that it's really rheumatism. They call it so, but it's something medical science cannot fathom, and now I'm ordered to Leamington, peremptorily, by the doctors."

"Mamma, they said you might go where you pleased," interposed the too truthful Clara.

"Ah, that shows how badly they think of the case," continued Mrs. Boothby,

undismayed. "But, health and strength permitting, we are sure to meet at the Hall. And we must lose you now positively!" for Charley was getting his papers and things together, preparatory for the stoppage at Twyford.

"Mrs. Boothby," said Charley in accents of expostulation, "you are sitting on my Punch, surely."

"Well, really, so I am," said Mrs. Boothby, jumping up vivaciously. "No harm done, I hope!"

Charley eyed the flattened periodical with some repugnance, but finally packed it up among his other papers, and in a few minutes we were among the crowd upon the platform at Twyford, standing wedged up against the wall in a not unpleasant crush of gay costumes and pretty faces, while a roaring express to London rushed past.

The day was hot, but not unpleasantly glaring, as we made our way from the station to Henley Bridge—one of those stately bridges of which builders seem now to have lost the secret, harmonising so well with the sparkling river, the white swans, and gay pleasure-boats. And then the wonderful sight from the crown of the bridge, the bright river enclosed in meadows and luxuriant hills, the old red town, with its hotels and boathouses, almost masked with gay bunting, and its wharves and landing-stages concealed by a floating street of brightly coloured house-boats, stretching as far as the eye can reach, the flat roofs adorned with beds of flowers and parterres of gay costumes! Below you can hardly see the water for the boats that cross and recross, and collide, and separate, and shoot to and fro with bewildering effect. Steady family boats; light outriggers; crank canoes of the Canadian type; Venetian gondolas, with gondoliers in character, who seem as much at home on the Thames as on the Lido; there is hardly a craft that floats upon inland waters that has not a representative here. And when the gun sounds to clear the course, you wonder how the seething mass of boats can be packed any closer to leave a lane of water for the racing boats. Then the gay coats and glittering badges of the Thames watermen become evident in the throng, as gradually the watery concourse is brought into something like order. The band plays, a gleam of bright sunshine brings all the glitter of the scene into almost painful prominence, and then through the lane of rippling waters two or three boats are seen struggling to the

winning-post. It is all the more in character with the scene that the racing is not of the most arduous description. It is a gay and sumptuous fête in which everybody cares more to see and be seen, and for cool drinks and luxurious luncheons, than for any display of obstinate pluck and endurance.

Charley surveys the scene from the bridge with eyes that have only one object, and that object is soon attained, for he seizes me by the arm. "There is Mr. Thomas's house-boat," he cries, "half-way down towards the island."

She was a pretty little house-boat that Mr. Thomas had named—with graceful recognition of the source of this and kindred luxuries—The Crab, while rows of flower-pots all round with their load of brilliant flowers completed the allusion. Mr. Thomas himself, a grey, cautious-looking man in a broad-brimmed straw hat and white linen suit, was standing at the foot of the ladder covered with red baize; the wife, almost purple with heat, was fanning herself in the most shady spot to be found, while on the roof, surrounded by a lot of young boating men in their gay, parti-coloured clothing, sat a handsome, showy young woman—evidently Rebecca.

There was much in the appearance of Rebecca to justify Charley's infatuation—fine contours and nobly-cut features, dark, expressive eyes, and raven-black hair, which was massed in a splendid club that hung almost to her heels. With all these attractions, I could no longer wonder that a young fellow should fall madly in love with her. I felt that I could do it myself were Charley out of the way; and out of the way it seemed he wished to be, his madness, after all, not carrying him to any violent lengths in the way of self-assertion. Yes, I actually felt pained as I saw the bright light that flashed into Rebecca's dark eyes. For such a gleam of joyful recognition from those eyes I acknowledged that it would be possible to throw away Pycroft Court, and Charlwood Hall into the bargain.

"Ah, here's our young squire!" cried Mr. Thomas, removing with his right hand his long white clay-pipe from his mouth, while with his left he familiarly grasped young Charlwood by the arm. "I won't say you're unexpected. Here, Becky," hailing the upper deck, "here's an old friend come to see you. Now, what is it to be? Shandy-gaff or champagne? I've got 'em all here!

Mother, you come and get something for the captain. We must treat him well now he's here. He don't come for nothing, I expect—do he, mother?"

But you will hardly believe the ruffianly trick that Charley played me at this moment. Hardly taking any notice of Mr. Thomas or his greetings, Charwood walked half-way up the companion-ladder, and beckoned Rebecca to come to him. She advanced with rather a scared expression, for she saw that something was wrong in her lover's face.

"Rebecca," said Pyecroft, "this is my great friend, Mr. Penrice, of whom I have often spoken. Please make him welcome for half an hour, while I fulfil a pressing engagement elsewhere." And, without another word, he sprang into the little dingey that was moored alongside, and ferried himself over to the opposite shore, where he quickly disappeared in the crowd of spectators and mountebanks.

"And what's the captain's little game now?" said Mr. Thomas angrily, knitting his grey brows under his broad-brimmed hat. "Ain't over civil, I think, to cut away like that."

"I'll be off after him, governor," said a young black-eyed youth, coming forward—evidently the son, and a disagreeable rendering of his pretty sister—the same cast of features, but bloated and unwholesome-looking, with a costume of bright, red-striped flannel, with a gaudy muffler and gaudier cap.

"No, you stop where you are, Dick; or go off to The Lion, and take your friends with you," said Rebecca to her brother in a tone of authority. "And will you come and sit down, Mr. Penrice, and see the races? The course is just cleared for one. I think it's the Wingfield Sculls."

Whatever the description of race might have been, I don't think that either Rebecca or I saw much of it. She tried, poor girl, to make conversation, and I, too, strove from the vasty depths of my indignation at Charley's trick to fish out something that might be acceptable to the ears of a pretty girl. But the thing was a dead failure. Soon we came to a complete silence. The young boating-men had withdrawn to their own devices. Rebecca and I had the flower-spangled deck to ourselves, while we could hear below Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and their son discussing Mr. Pyecroft's affairs with not unreasonable bitterness. The wind blew, the flags waved, the waters rippled, boats shot to and fro, but

all passed like a dream before my eyes, all my attention fixed upon the miserable business before me. I felt that if my friend had asked me to throw the girl into the water, and drown her, I could have done it more easily than sit thus and tell her in cold blood that all the happiness of her life was ended. After all, Rebecca was the first to speak. She drew her chair closer to me, and said in a quiet, strained voice: "You have some message for me from Charley—from Mr. Pyecroft?"

THOUGHT-READING EXTRA-ORDINARY.

[It is my duty to tell the reader that this narrative has appeared in print already. It was published in the (now extinct) University Magazine, in July, 1878. I reproduce it, word for word, as it there appeared, and, for so doing, I have the kind consent of Dr. Kenningale Cook, who was proprietor and editor of the magazine. Besides avoiding a charge of vain repetition, I have another motive for making this declaration. I wish it to be clearly understood that my facts were placed on record within a very short time of their occurrence, and when they were perfectly fresh in my memory. In 1878 people's attention had not been aroused, as it has been of late, by the exploits of the thought-readers and others who claim occult powers. Had I kept the record of my strange experience in my own breast until now, I might be reasonably suspected of embellishing my facts to suit recent developments of occult speculation. From this point of view it seems to me fortunate that my record has already appeared in print, drawn up at a time when both my memory and my motives were beyond suspicion.]

"Early in January, 1877, I was stationed at Moradabad, in Rohilkund. My wife was in England invalided; so, instead of living alone, I had adopted a common and convenient Indian fashion and was "chumming" with a friend. My chum was Mr. Carmichael-Smyth, acting Superintendent of Police for the district. One day Mr. Smyth told me that he expected to receive a visit from a native, an amateur conjuror, who would perform some amusing tricks. It so happened that on the same day we were waited on by a Parsee pedlar, who wanted to sell us ivory and sandal-wood carvings, and such-like knick-knacks, which are the usual stock-in-trade of the Parsee travelling merchants. While we were

chaffering with this man the conjuror was announced, and was shown into the common sitting-room. He was followed by a crowd of our servants—for the native of every rank loves a conjuror, and gazes on a conjuring performance with the simple admiration of a child.

"There was nothing very remarkable in the appearance or dress of our conjuror. An elderly man, short and sparely made, dressed in dingy white cotton, with very tight sleeves to his robe and very tight legs to his drawers; he might have been a respectable servant out of place, but actually was a small landowner who had taken to conjuring for his amusement.

"When he entered the room he spread a white cloth upon the floor and sat down upon it with his back to the wall, the door of the room being on his right hand. His spectators were disposed in the following fashion: Mr. Smyth sat on a chair nearly in the middle of the room, I was sitting on a sofa near the door, the Parsee merchant stood in the doorway about arm's length from me. The servants stood about in groups, the largest group being between the door and the conjuror. As soon as he had settled himself he turned to the Parsee and asked for the loan of a rupee. The pedlar at first demurred a little, but, on being guaranteed against loss, he produced the coin. He was going to put it into the conjuror's hand, but the latter refused and told the Parsee to hand it to Mr. Smyth's bearer. The bearer took it, and, at the request of the conjuror, looked at it and declared it to be really a rupee. The conjuror then told him to hand it to his master. Mr. Smyth took it, and then followed this dialogue: Conjuror: Are you sure that is a rupee? Smyth: Yes. Conjuror: Close your hand on it and hold it tight. Now, think of some country in Europe, but do not tell me your thought (then the conjuror ran over the names of several countries, such as France, Germany, Russia, Turkey, and America—for the native of India is under the impression that America is in Europe). After a moment's pause Mr. Smyth said he had thought of a country. 'Then open your hand,' said the juggler, 'see what you have got, and tell me if it is a coin of the country you thought of.' It was a five-franc piece, and Mr. Smyth had thought of France. He was going to hand the coin to the conjuror, but the latter said: 'No, pass it to the other sahib.' Mr. Smyth accordingly put the five-franc piece into

my hand; I looked closely at it, then shut my hand and thought of Russia. When I opened it I found, not a Russian but a Turkish silver piece about the size of the five-franc, or of our own crown-piece. This I handed to Mr. Smyth, and suggested that he should name America, which he did, and found a Mexican dollar in his hand. The coin, whatever it was, had never been in the conjuror's hand from the time the rupee was borrowed from the Parsee merchant. Mr. Smyth and his bearer had both of them closely examined the rupee, and Mr. Smyth and I turned over several times the five-franc piece, the Turkish coin, and the dollar; so the trick did not depend on a reversible coin. Indeed, it could not, for the coin underwent three changes, as has been seen. I need only add, for the information of those readers who know not India, that a rupee is only about the size of a florin, and therefore about half the weight of a five-franc piece.

"The juggler performed several other tricks that day, but they were of a commonplace kind and in no way comparable to the coin trick, which I have never seen rivalled by any other conjuror in India or Europe.

"The following evening Mr. Smyth and I were to dine at the mess of the Twenty-eighth Native Infantry. We told some of our friends in the regiment of the tricks our juggler had shown us; they asked us to invite the man to perform after dinner in the mess drawing-room. He came accordingly, and began by showing some very commonplace tricks. I wanted him to do the coin trick, but he made some excuse. I should mention that one of the officers was himself an amateur conjuror, and Mr. Smyth introduced him, and our juggler to each other as comrades in art magic. Possibly our juggler may have been afraid that the captain would detect his method; or perhaps he only felt nervous about repeating a trick which must have depended very much on mere guesswork. Be that as it may, he would not perform the coin trick at the mess. But he did another almost equally wonderful.

"As before, he was seated on a white cloth, which this time I think was a tablecloth, borrowed from the mess-sergeant. He asked some one present to produce a rupee, and to lay it down at the remote edge of the cloth. The cloth being three or four yards in length, the conjuror could not have touched the coin without being

seen, and, in fact, did not touch it. He then asked for a signet-ring. Several were offered him, and he chose out one which had a very large oval seal, projecting well beyond the gold hoop on both sides. This ring he tossed and tumbled several times in his hands, now throwing it into the air and catching it, then shaking it between his clasped hands, all the time mumbling half-articulate words in some Hindostanee patois. Then setting the ring down on the cloth at about half-arm's length in front of him, he said, slowly and distinctly in good Hindostanee: 'Ring, rise up and go to the rupee.' The ring rose, with the seal uppermost, and resting on the hoop, slowly, with a kind of dancing or jerking motion, it passed over the cloth until it came to where the rupee lay on the remote edge; then it lay down on the coin. The conjuror then said: 'Ring, lay hold of the rupee, and bring it to me.' The projecting edge of the seal seemed to grapple the edge of the coin; the ring and the rupee rose into a kind of wrestling attitude, and, with the same dancing or jerking motion, the two returned to within reach of the juggler's hand.

"I have no theory of any kind to explain either of these tricks. I should mention, however, that the juggler entirely disclaimed all supernatural power, and alleged that he performed his tricks by mere sleight of hand. It will be observed that he had no preparation of his surroundings, no machinery, and no confederate."

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXV. MR. GOODALL IN PERPLEXITY.

GERALD FANE had come down to Deerhurst on Friday; his letters from Locarno had been waiting for him there since Thursday morning. On that morning two foreign letters had also reached Woodcote House, and had been read by John Goodall at his early breakfast.

He was alone. Mrs. Fraser was staying in the house, taking care of Helen like a kind stepmother, but she did not come down to breakfast till two hours later, and this was a comfort to John, who was not very fond of Mrs. Fraser. She talked a good deal of nonsense, he thought, and was inclined to patronise him.

John, having unlocked the post-bag, read Theo's letter first, her long one to Helen, and her little note of congratula-

tion to himself. His face lengthened very considerably, for he was fond of Theo, and did not at all like the notion of her throwing herself away.

"Just like her! Didn't I say so? And Helen wouldn't believe me. Cool chap that young Fane! All our fault, I suppose, for having her down here. This will put Helen in an awful fuss."

With these meditations, he went on steadily eating his breakfast. Must Helen be told? Should he send the letter up to Mrs. Fraser and ask her to tell the news as she thought best? No, he did not like that plan. He had not much confidence in Mrs. Fraser.

Then he took up Lady Redcliff's letter, which he had not noticed at first. This made him open his eyes and whistle, and pull a longer face than before, though he smiled at first at her ladyship's peremptory style.

"Poor Theo!" he reflected, "of course her grandmother is right; it is a mad notion altogether—not that I ever actually called Litton a swindler—but it's a disagreeable business, and I wish anybody would tell me what I ought to do. One thing, I'll take care that Helen knows nothing about it till she is stronger—and so Mrs. Fraser shall not hear of it from me."

After this John read the letter carefully over again, put it into his pocket-book, and went upstairs to wish Helen good-bye before going off to his work. He took Theo's little note to him, and read it to Helen as she lay smiling among her pillows, not thinking of much but her baby. In spite of her weakness, however, she put her husband into a dilemma by saying rather wistfully:

"I wonder Theo didn't write to me."

John looked at her doubtfully for a moment. He was perfectly truthful and open by nature, and if Helen had been herself, she would certainly have seen that he was deceiving her.

"Perhaps she thought you were not strong enough," he suggested, feeling like a liar.

"She is a silly old thing; she knows nothing about it," said Helen. "John, nurse says he is beginning to take notice." The change of subject was very comforting, and John presently went off to his work with Theo's secret still hidden away in his pocket-book.

He did not read his other letters till he got to the office. Among them there was a very friendly one from Hugh North,

whom, at Helen's wish, he had asked to be godfather to his son. On reading this it struck John that Hugh North was an uncommonly sensible man; that he was more interested in Theo and her affairs than any other member of her family; and that he, of course, would be the right person to consult in this difficulty. If anything could be done to stop such a foolish affair, Captain North would be the person to do it. Theo had probably written to him, for she was not at all ashamed of her wild proceedings, but John thought there could be no harm in having a little communication with Hugh on his own account. At least, it would be pleasant not to feel alone in the business. So he sat down and wrote a short letter to Hugh, telling him the news, in case he did not know it already, expressing his own regret and vexation, and enclosing a copy of Lady Redcliff's letter. When this was done, he put the whole thing out of his mind as much as possible, and attended to his own business.

His head clerk was full of a report that the Deerpurth Collieries were likely to be for sale, and Mr. Goodall spent most of the day looking over the books with him, in order to decide whether it would be a prudent step to buy them. John was strongly inclined towards it; he deeply regretted having missed a former opportunity, which would have saved him from many annoyances, and the present entanglement among them.

He asked his clerk casually whether Mr. Fane was at Deerpurth. The man said he thought not, but Mr. Litton had been there for a day or two, and there was some rumour of a dissolution of partnership between him and Mr. Warren.

John did not write that day to Theo, or to Lady Redcliff; he thought it best to wait till he had heard from Hugh North; but he was not quite prepared for the effect of his letter on that calm personage. Soon after he reached his office on Friday morning he received a telegram:

"I must speak to you. Will come down by the four train to-day. If you cannot receive me, telegraph, and come here."

John considered. Mrs. Fraser was going back to Linwood that afternoon. He did not wish to ask her to stay another day, which he must do, he thought, if he went off himself to London, for Helen could not be left alone. He was determined not to tell her the news till he had talked it over with Captain

North, and he did not quite see why he should inconvenience himself by rushing off to town on the affairs of his wife's cousin, much as he liked her. Of course, he did not care for the notion of a visitor while Helen was ill; but, after all, Hugh North was a very quiet fellow; and, on the whole, he thought he had better come.

He telegraphed that he should be met that evening at Mainley, and at luncheon-time he went to Helen's room, and told her quietly that Hugh was coming for a night or two.

"How funny!" said Helen. "Why doesn't he wait till I am downstairs again?"

"Did you ask him?" said Mrs. Fraser, who was sitting by the fire.

"No, I did not," said John a little shortly.

He thought it was no business of hers.

Mrs. Fraser did not at all mind his attempts at snubbing. She had her revenge by calling him "That excellent creature!" "Such a good, solid fellow!" and other opprobrious names of the same kind.

"Poor Hugh!" she said good-humouredly. "I always think his life is rather dismal, though he has plenty of friends. I dare say he wants a little change, and of course he ought to see his godson. At the same time—with no disrespect to you, dear John, and of course Nell is out of the question just now—I could understand it better if Theo were staying with you."

"Oh, mamma, that was always an idea of yours! But she doesn't care the least bit for him," said Helen, while John stared at Mrs. Fraser in horror and astonishment.

"No," she said, looking at the screen in her hand; "Theo is not likely to do anything so sensible. But it was your Uncle Henry's great wish, you know; and we all know that Hugh, who is most particular about girls in general, never had a word of blame for any of Theo's pranks. And now that he is alone, and with plenty of money, too, and Theo with nobody but that horrid Lady Redcliff—well, I think it would be the best thing that could happen, and I only wonder it has not happened before now."

"Did you know anything of this, Helen?" said John almost sternly.

"How absurd you are, John!" said Mrs. Fraser, looking round. "There is no secret. I have been saying nothing but what the whole family has always known."

"Oh, it's nothing!" murmured Helen.

"You mean to say, Mrs. Fraser," said

John, "that you believe Hugh North to be attached to Theo."

"I mean to say that I don't mean to be cross-examined," said Mrs. Fraser, smiling. "Yes, I think it is a sort of attachment. I shall be rather surprised if they don't marry in the end. But I wouldn't say anything about it, if I were you."

"No danger of that," said John, and he went out of the room.

The complications were thickening round him. He had no relations of his own to trouble him, but his wife's relations seemed bent on making his life uncomfortable.

Captain North arrived at Woodcote House about half-past six. He was always grave, and there was nothing unusual in his manner as he shook hands with his host, who met him in the hall.

"Very glad to see you," said John.

Mrs. Fraser's hints made him cautious about saying any more.

"Thanks," said Hugh. "I thought it best to come."

There was a curious, momentary flash in his blue eyes as he spoke, but he went on to enquire quite properly for Helen and the baby.

It was not till after dinner that they began to talk about the subject that had brought him there. The evening was warm and lovely, and they were sitting near an open window, looking out into the soft, moonshiny twilight. The lamp-rays fell on some flowers growing outside, making them shine like gems; there were voices and laughter in the village not far away; upstairs Helen and her new darling had fallen gently asleep. All the cares of life were kept away from her, but they weighed very heavily on her cousin Hugh, and on her husband, from something more than sympathy. John heartily wished that Mrs. Fraser had held her tongue. In that case he would have better known what to say to this man, who had talked in a dreary, absent way all through dinner, and was now leaning forward in a dejected attitude, silent, and staring into the garden.

At last John could not bear it any longer, and he began to speak in a kind, hearty voice, his eyes fixed on Hugh.

"I suppose you think this is rather bad news—don't you?" he said. "But if Theo has made up her mind, what are we to do? Lady Redcliff seems to expect a good deal; I'm afraid she will be disappointed."

Hugh winced a little, and did not answer for a moment. John had, no doubt, some slight guess at the truth, but he could not

tell that speaking of Theo, or hearing her name mentioned, was the sharpest pain this soldier had ever gone through. Hugh turned white to the lips, and coughed, and at last broke out into words. It was easier after that first effort.

"Lady Redcliff is quite right," he said very sternly. "The thing must be stopped."

"Ah, but how?"

"You have a bad opinion of Litton," said Hugh.

"I don't think much of him; but, after all, that is nothing against Fane."

"I am going to tell you something about Litton," Hugh went on, "and after that you will judge what is best to be done."

John nodded. He listened with the most careful attention to Hugh's story, which was told very shortly and simply.

"I do not wish to rake the matter up now," said Hugh at the end; "not publicly, I mean. My father forgave the man, and, though I can't do that, I will let him alone. But you will judge now, Goodall. My cousin—she can't—she can't marry that man's brother."

"Of course, if she knew, she would never have thought of it," said John gravely.

Hugh said nothing; he could not tell John Goodall that Theo did know.

"You think she ought to be told?" said John presently. "But are you sure it would make any difference to her now? She seemed to me rather a positive character."

"Most likely not. I don't want to discuss that," said Hugh. "Don't you see what I mean? It can't be—it must not be allowed to happen."

"I don't like the notion of it at all," said John. "I agree with you, but the question is, how is it to be prevented?"

"Why, surely," said Captain North, "a girl's relations have some influence, some authority. You see what her grandmother says—she is perfectly right. Even if it was not for this other reason, she might as well marry a beggar. It is an impossible marriage for her, and nothing but misery can come of it. Even if she is bent on ruining herself, we must not allow it. You must help me—we must do something."

All this was so unlike the calm, unimpassioned Hugh; there was such intense pain in his voice, his very attitude was so strained and miserable; that John Goodall was quite touched.

"What a confounded pity——" he began, and broke off suddenly, going on in a more reasonable manner. "Well, you see, North,

from what I know of your cousin, I suspect she has taken a fancy to this fellow, and she probably won't choose to hold him responsible for his brother's sins. She has something of her own—what is it, three hundred a year? And I suppose she will have something from her grandmother, but not if she marries to displease her. I don't suppose Gerald Fane has more than a poor curate would have, and I hear rumours of this Deerhurst colliery business breaking up; in that case he will be thrown out of employment. Then there is this affair of Litton's, which makes it quite necessary to prevent the thing, as you say. We can't have our family mixed up with swindlers. I think we had better have a talk with Fane himself."

Hugh North had listened patiently to this long prose, which told him nothing that he did not know before. At the final suggestion, however, he lifted up his head and laughed.

"What can be the use of talking to a selfish fool like that?" he said. "I should like to pick a quarrel with him, and shoot him. That is the only way of getting rid of him, as far as I can see."

"I won't stand by you, there," said John.

Hugh laughed again, and then passed his hand over his eyes and sighed. His calmness seemed to be breaking down, and now John quite believed what Mrs. Fraser had said. He was very grave; he was sorry for everybody, and felt himself, perhaps, benevolently superior to everybody concerned.

"I don't think Fane is a selfish fool," he said. "I believe he would have been a nice fellow, if circumstances had let him. I will find out to-morrow morning whether he is at Deerhurst, and you and I will talk to him. Or I will talk to him, if you are likely to lose your temper."

"Why should I lose my temper?" said Hugh stiffly. "I should be ready to talk to him, if I saw any use in it. But the only thing we can do is to threaten his brother with exposure."

"That will be a last resource," said John. "I should not be surprised if he were ignorant of that matter himself."

"Hardly possible," said Hugh.

They went on talking till very late, assuring each other that the thing must and should be stopped; but Hugh, at least, felt quite as despairing as when he had received Goodall's letter that morning, and in the first wild impatience had telegraphed to him. He would have moved heaven

and earth to do away with what had happened; but heaven and earth were immovable by him. The idea of Theo actually engaged to Gerald Fane, was maddening. He was sorry now that he had come down to Woodcote, for it needed a great effort to hide his feelings, and to make worthy John believe that he was only thinking of Theo's interests. They all regarded him almost as Theo's brother; and her brother had a right to be furious at her throwing herself away; but her brother would have taken the matter into his own hands, would have gone off to Locarno, without consulting anybody; and Hugh did not dare to think of seeing her. He rather wondered, as he lay awake that night, that John had not advised him to remonstrate with her. Could he have betrayed himself? No; the idea was absurd; a fellow like John Goodall could not possibly find out what had been told to nobody.

He came down the next morning very grave and dismal. John met him with the news that young Fane was at Deerhurst, and they agreed to walk over there together soon after breakfast. Helen sent down a message that she would like to see Hugh in the afternoon, and to show him the baby. He trembled at the thought of what she might say about Theo, and asked John what she thought of the affair.

"She knows nothing about it," said John reassuringly.

They walked towards Deerhurst by way of the colliery, through Woodcote village, along the high stony road, down that steep lane where Theo and Wool had walked between bright autumn hedges, now lovely with the cooler, calmer brightness of spring. There lay the colliery, seemingly deserted; there were the marshy meadows in their unhealthy green, the gleaming poisonous pools, the black stumps blacker than ever, with all the tender tints of air and earth round them. A forest of reeds was growing up by the water; the railway banks beyond were covered with gorse in flower.

"It does not look like a place to make money in," said John thoughtfully. "But I shall make a difference, if it ever belongs to me."

A little way beyond the colliery-gate there was a turn in the lane, screened by large thorn-bushes; the railway-arch was just beyond. At this corner they met Gerald Fane, walking very fast, and stooping, with his eyes on the ground.

There was something in his manner

which surprised both the men very much as he came up to them and stopped to speak to them without any sign of confusion. He did not look at all happy, or like an accepted lover; he evidently had not the slightest wish to avoid them; he looked indifferently at Hugh North, almost as if he did not know or care who he was.

"Have you heard that we are going to clear out of this?" he said to John Goodall.

"It's true, then?" said John.

"True, as far as I am concerned," said Gerald quietly. "I am going to Africa. I have just had a telegram. I have got to sail at the beginning of the week. A grand opening for building houses at Kimberley!"

"Why, you are not an architect or a builder," said John.

"I'm a director of a company, and that covers everything," answered Gerald.

"Is not this something very sudden?"

"I settled it with my brother last night. Yes, it's rather sudden, but things generally are; and one must get rid of one's life somehow."

The three young men stood together in the road. Hugh and John were both looking at Gerald—John with an interest which was not at all unkind; Hugh with a wondering anxiety which tried to be like indifference, and succeeded fairly well.

Gerald himself was looking away up the hill, and for a moment or two they were all silent.

Then, as John evidently did not know what to say or do next, and as young Fane was not likely to stand there long to be stared at, Captain North took the matter into his own hands.

"You know who I am, Mr. Fane?" he said.

Gerald bowed, and the look in his eyes was both fierce and ashamed.

"Then you will excuse my curiosity," said Hugh very coldly. "The last news that I heard about you was—not that you were going to Africa."

"I did not know that myself till last night," said Gerald in a low voice. "It can't matter to you where I go."

"If that other news is true, it matters extremely."

"It is not true."

"I must ask you to explain yourself," said Hugh, frowning angrily.

Gerald did not answer him directly, but turned to John Goodall, who was standing by, ready to interfere if the quarrel grew serious.

"You don't know," he said; "at least, I think not. But Captain North knows very well. Is it not enough that I tell you I had a talk with my brother last night?" he said to Hugh.

"I understand," said Hugh after a pause. "You did not know before?"

"I know now."

"Very well, and you see how utterly impossible—— But, even if there had been no such obstacle as this, I tell you the thing would have been equally impossible, and I should have told you so under any circumstances."

Gerald looked Captain North full in the face now. His eyes were full of anger and scornful defiance, but he said nothing, and after a moment his eyes fell before Hugh's cold stare.

"You have the advantage of me, Captain North," he said; "we won't argue. I feel the disgrace as much as you can wish, and you will not be troubled with me any more."

Then he walked off towards the colliery. The two others strolled on in the direction of the railway, at first without speaking, but presently John Goodall said:

"Poor fellow!"

"I don't see why you need pity him," said Hugh. "A fellow who climbs too high is sure to get a fall. The airs he gave himself were enough for me, long ago."

"He is popular generally," said John. "I wonder how Theo will take it!"

He was amused and a little angry at Hugh's contemptuous hardness. If he meant to punish him by this sudden allusion to Theo, he succeeded, for Hugh mooned along in a depth of dismallness, and hardly spoke again till they were back at Woodcote. Then he insisted on going back to town by the next train without waiting to see Helen, and John, to say the truth, did not press him much to stay.

Mr. Gerald Fane had evidently broken off his engagement; but it seemed that no one was pleased, not even Theo's most anxious and affectionate relations.

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, 1884.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XLVII. INTEGRATIO AMORIS.

NEXT morning's post brought both Mrs. Tuck and Ida startling news; to Mrs. Tuck in a letter, to Ida in a newspaper addressed in Mrs. John's writing, and forwarded from The Keep. Ida flew upstairs, newspaper in hand, to Mrs. Tuck's room, to find that lady reading and re-reading in bed what to her were "a few of the unpleasantest words that ever blotted paper."

"I knew there was some mistake!" cried Ida breathlessly, handing Mrs. Tuck the paper, and pointing to a letter signed "Archie Guard."

It was a short and sharp letter contradicting the romance built up by the reporter on the foundation of his rescue of Anastasia. This romance was just as true, said the letter, as the lady's attempt at suicide for his sake. Mere humanity had been his sole motive for saving her. The irritation in the tone of the letter was due to his discovery that Anastasia herself had been industriously spreading about the report of their reconciliation. Mrs. Tuck read and re-read this letter, just as she had read and re-read her own; but curiously enough with the opposite effect upon her spirits: Archie's letter was plainly an antidote to the poison of her own.

She sat up in bed, looked towards Ida without seeing her for a few moments, while she followed and found many issues of the clue just given her. More than one mystery gradually became clear to this quick-witted woman in those few moments. At last she said:

"Ida, it was an old letter—one of those

breach of promise letters," with a most emphatic nod.

Ida looked at her bewildered, not taking this view in for a little, and said then:

"But he told you yesterday he was engaged to her."

"Well, no, my dear," replied Mrs. Tuck, somewhat embarrassed. "He didn't say so directly, now that I think of it; not in so many words. I was put on the wrong trail by his avowal of the letter, and misunderstood him to mean this by something he said, which I now see admits of a different interpretation altogether." Then hastening from this embarrassing topic, she said suddenly and decidedly, and to Ida's amazement: "This must be set right at once. I must see him again; or, perhaps, you had better see him this time, dear; I made such a mess of it."

Ida was confounded with this happy surprise, and said, and could say, nothing.

"If I only knew where he was staying!" continued Mrs. Tuck with a puckered brow. "I must telegraph to Mrs. Pybus; or stay, I know. Fetch me pen, ink, and paper directly, dear."

Ida flew with the flight and the happy beating heart of a bird set suddenly free. When she returned with the writing materials, Mrs. Tuck sat up in bed and scrawled off this hasty note to Archie:

"MY DEAR SIR,—Miss Bompas sent me the letter I showed you yesterday with the assurance that it referred to her attempt at suicide and to your heroic rescue of her, and was written by you on the day after that occurrence. It has this moment struck me that it was an old letter with a meaning altogether different. If I am right I should take it as a very great kindness if you would call to receive my most penitent apology. I cannot feel easy till I am

assured of your forgiveness. Believe me, my dear sir, very sincerely yours,

"B. TUCK.

"P.S.—I shall stay indoors all day in the hope that you may call.

"P.P.S.—I was too angry and unjust yesterday to assure you—though I hardly think you needed the assurance—that your cousin of course declined to read the letter, though she could not help hearing its contents from me. Her extreme distress about the misunderstanding makes me the more anxious to hear that you think it pardonable, and will pardon it."

It will be seen that the "P.P.S.," with a very natural inconsistency, takes as certain the misunderstanding which the letter assumed to be merely probable.

"Do you know the name of the shop where we bought the photograph, Ida?" asked Mrs. Tuck as she enclosed this letter in an envelope. "We could get his address there, as he gave it to the shopman."

"I know the shop."

Mrs. Tuck meditated a moment, and said then:

"Well, dear, perhaps you had better go yourself, as there may be no time to lose. Take Sarah with you, and send her in a ransom with the letter to the address when you get it."

Sarah was the lady's-maid.

Mrs. Tuck was quite excited in her eagerness, but Ida needed no spur. She and Sarah were soon ready, and soon at the shop. Here they found that Archie was staying at The Grand—beside them; and thither Sarah was dispatched with the letter.

Ida, returning to Mrs. Tuck, was surprised to find her still in bed with seemingly no idea of getting up.

"He is staying just beside us here at The Grand, Mrs. Tuck."

"Then he'll probably be here in a few minutes," replied Mrs. Tuck complacently, settling her head more comfortably on the pillow.

"Won't you see him?" cried Ida, fearing, hoping, she hardly knew which, to be allowed to see Archie alone.

"Oh, certainly, if you particularly wish me to be present!" with an arch smile and look which it was not possible to mistake, or even to affect to mistake, and which brought the colour in a flood to Ida's face. "No, no, my dear; I've neddled and muddled enough already. You must make my peace and your own

together. And, Ida dear, you're so stately and reserved, that I am sure you'll forgive me for reminding you that we owe him every amend you can make him in manner and otherwise. We did him a most cruel injustice at a time when he must have felt it most cruelly—when everything was torn from him together—health, fortune, his good name, his very name itself. You mustn't forget that, dear; and you mustn't forget either," continued Mrs. Tuck, with most marked emphasis; "you mustn't forget either that, being penniless and without even a name, he will probably be too proud to make any advance; while pride itself obliges you, as an heiress and as being in the wrong, to be humble and conciliatory, and, I was almost going to say, encouraging." She might have said it without making her meaning plainer.

This lecture from Mrs. Tuck! The Mrs. Tuck who, a few hours before, had dwelt on Archie's poverty and namelessness as not the least of his crimes! At first Ida thought that Mrs. Tuck must have heard of Archie's having somehow recovered name and fortune; but when she spoke of him still as nameless and penniless, Ida knew there must be another reason for this sudden and confounding conversion. What, she could not imagine; nor did she now give much time or thought to an attempt to fathom this mystery. Enough to know that Mrs. Tuck was eager for her reconciliation with Archie, and for something more than a reconciliation—a something the thought of which doubled the beating of her heart in intense and alternating hope, fear, joy, doubt, certainty, despair—briefly, in love.

While she sat silent by Mrs. Tuck's bed, with eyes downcast and cheeks from which the blood seemed to ebb and flow like a wave, the summons came.

"Please, there was a gentleman below who wished to see Miss Luard." Not Mrs. Tuck, but Miss Luard.

"I thought so!" cried Mrs. Tuck triumphantly. "He had quite enough of me yesterday. You'd better take the letter, dear; when he reads it again he will see how inevitable the mistake was." Ida took the letter and went downstairs, a picture of perfect composure, though she could hardly tell how she got down. At the sitting-room door she paused for a moment to "pull herself together," and then with a trembling hand opened it and entered, seemingly stately and serene as usual.

Archie did not advance to meet her, but could not help looking his eagerness. He would not take Mrs. Tuck's word for Ida's attitude towards him. Ida, as he did not advance, stopped and faltered out :

"I brought the letter," hardly knowing what to say, or what she said.

"Ida, how could you believe it?" in a tone of poignant reproach that went to her very soul.

"I wouldn't have believed it, Archie, if I hadn't seen you together. Forgive me, Archie, I didn't know what to think," holding out her hand and speaking in a piteous tone of penitence and entreaty. This the cold and proud Ida! Archie, sure now of his ground, sprang forward, seized her hand, kissed it passionately, and said then :

"Seen us together? When? What do you mean?"

Then Ida told him how she had called on the day after the fire, and had surprised Anastasia and him in what certainly seemed an attitude of reconciliation. Archie, having made his explanation of this rather questionable attitude, cried :

"Oh, it was to that the letter was supposed to allude," opening and re-reading it.

"She must have seen you," he said, as he tossed it aside.

"Yes; she saw me, and of course I thought she told you."

"She's——" But he fortunately did not complete the sentence.

"I couldn't help misjudging you, Archie."

"Of course you couldn't; no one could. Why, she has even dated it to the day!"

"Then you forgive me, Archie?"

"Forgive you!" On a sudden impulse impossible to resist, he took her in his arms and kissed her.

She was his cousin, you see, even if she was Captain Brabazon's betrothed. Nevertheless, he feared he had offended her, and was inexpressibly relieved on releasing her when she said only :

"And you will let me have my letter?"

"Your letter?"

"The letter I—I sent back," stammered Ida, blushing painfully, for she couldn't speak or think of the insult without shame.

"You didn't think I should keep it as a souvenir?"

"It couldn't have made you more unhappy than it made me, Archie. But you can tell me what was in it."

"It was only a note asking you to see me before I quitted England."

"Archie, don't go!" imploringly, with yearning eyes, and a gesture of entreaty.

"If only you were free!" he groaned, turning suddenly round, and burying his face in his arms upon the mantelpiece.

He felt her tremulous hand upon his shoulder.

"I am free, Archie," her voice timid and trembling as her hand.

He faced round and caught her in his arms, not this time to be released so soon. Then he held her from him to look into the blushing face, whose downcast eyes could not meet his burning gaze. He was trying in that look to realise incredible happiness—in that kind of suspense which cannot believe in a great joy because of its greatness—a haze created by the very glory of the sun it hides.

"My darling!" drawing her to him again.

These first transports over, he asked her, in order to realise her release, how she had attained it. Then did Ida grow eloquent over Dick's magnanimity, to be cut suddenly short by the question :

"When do you say he released you?"

"The day we met you," answered Ida, surprised by the question.

"It was the day he heard of it!" exclaimed Archie.

"Heard of it! Of what?"

"Why, of your fortune having passed back to me."

"Oh, Archie!" she exclaimed, her eyes shining with a new happiness. "Is it true?"

"Didn't you know?" in a tone of surprise.

"No; nor Mrs. Tuck. We have heard nothing of it at all. Is it quite certain?"

"Quite."

"I cannot tell you how glad I am," with an emphasis which doubled the meaning of the words.

"Why?" he asked, thinking the reason to be her certainty that Mrs. Tuck's opposition to their engagement would now be removed.

"Why? Because—because you are so proud, Archie. You are not happy unless you give everything and take nothing."

"Nothing!" putting a world of meaning into the exclamation, and the ardent look of admiration which accompanied it. "It was not your fortune, dearest, that put you beyond my reach. Your fortune was nothing beside you, and I never thought of it when I thought of you. But I had not even a name to offer you. Every-

thing seemed to go from me in a moment as in a dream, and to come back to me in a moment as from a dream. I can hardly realise it."

Then they talked of yesterday, as of years ago, and of to-day as for ever, and never recurred once to the subject of Dick, or of Mrs. Tuck, or of the circumstances of Archie's recovery of name and fortune. They could think and speak only each of the other, and of the love which made them a universe to themselves—as mysterious, infinite, and glorious as that about and above them.

Even this but yesterday seemed to both a sterile promontory o'erhung by a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours; but to-day they have crossed such a bridge as that described in Tieck's exquisite story of *The Elves*; and the forlorn and fearful wilderness blossoms like the rose; earth is again a goodly frame; and heaven an excellent canopy, a brave o'erhanging firmament, a majestical roof fretted with golden fire.

It was lunch-time before Mrs. Tuck appeared. She had considerably left them together for more than two hours—rejoicing herself the while in the success of her ingenious, if not ingenuous, suggestion to Ida that she should try to conquer her reserve, and make what advance she could to Archie, remembering the vast difference in their fortunes.

So it came about that in the foregoing interview between the lovers, Ida thought this difference to be in her favour, while Archie knew it was in his. But for this Ida could not have made so frank an advance, nor could Archie have received it so frankly.

Thus Mrs. Tuck's strategy had the justification of success—its sole justification. For no reader will be as much surprised as he will be shocked to learn, that Mrs. Tuck had heard from Mr. Mead that morning of Archie's having come upon conclusive evidence of his legitimacy.

"How do you do, Mr. Guard?" cried Mrs. Tuck effusively as she entered, having first fumbled a good deal with the door-handle. "I hope you have made my peace, my dear; you've been so long about it that I made sure you must have found it difficult," with an arch look at Ida.

Ida, blushing, hastened to turn the conversation.

"I've lost my fortune, Mrs. Tuck."

"Lost your fortune!" exclaimed Mrs. Tuck, throwing up her hands, and express-

ing in her voice and face an amazement all the more overwhelming because it was assumed.

"Yes; Archie has got it," glancing shyly up at him.

Mrs. Tuck sat down and looked in a bewildered manner from one to the other. Her confusion of face was so masterly done as to disarm Archie's suspicion. He had been absolutely certain that Mrs. Tuck's letter of apology was inspired by her knowledge of this sudden turn of fortune; but now he was equally convinced that he had done her great injustice by the assumption, and was, therefore, eager to make her what amends he could for his ungenerous construction of a generous letter.

"We have compromised the matter, subject to your approval, Mrs. Tuck," he said, taking Ida's hand.

"That is to say," retorted Mrs. Tuck with a suspiciously quick recovery of her composure; "that is to say, you would take both Ida and her fortune? Really a most unselfish compromise on your part, Mr. Guard!" smiling pleasantly upon Archie. Then, recollecting herself, she added seriously: "But pray allow me to get over one shock at a time. Do I understand you to mean that you have established—Ida, my dear, it's my turn for a tête-à-tête with your cousin now. I promise you it won't be of the unconscionable length of yours."

Ida having retired, Mrs. Tuck questioned Archie as to the particulars of the discovery of the evidence of his legitimacy, about which she had no need to affect a curiosity, for she sincerely felt it.

Archie's account amounted in brief to this: The place where Liz and Ben's little girl had been buried, and whither Liz piously bore for burial Ben's mutilated limb, was Browbridge, the home of Grace Gritts, and of her sister, Charlotte Ann Easterbee. Grace was a cousin of Liz's, and when Liz found that she could not return to Ryeoote on the same day of her arrival at Browbridge, she begged and was conceded the hospitality of the Red House—a concession from Grace Gritts which will surprise no one who knows how sacred the duty of hospitality to kinsfolk is held in Yorkshire. Even Grace was not so graceless as to disregard it. Besides, she needed Liz's advice. Now Liz, to whom Mrs. John wrote anything of concern to Archie, had heard of his loss of Mr. Tuck's property through his illegitimacy; but she had no idea

who his father's first and lawful wife was supposed to be until Grace showed her old letters to her sister, and told her at the same time of Dr. Grice's mysterious visit. Now this visit had made a deep impression upon Grace, not merely because visitors to the Red House were few, but because she still cherished a greedy hope that her sister had left some money of which the mysterious visitor had come to tell her, and would have told her if she hadn't taken his ill-timed jest about a baby in a manner so alarming. Liz had hardly been half an hour in the house when Grace submitted the matter to her judgment; and that she might be perfect mistress of it from first to last, put into her hands some letters she had stolen from her sister, and had shown to their father upon his death-bed to ensure her sister's disinheritance.

It was to this disinheritance the letters mainly referred. They were plainly answers of Geoffrey Guard's to appeals from Charlotte Ann "to make an honest woman of her" before the birth of her child; because otherwise her father had vowed both to disinherit her and turn her out of the house. Plainly, too, she did not plead any promise of marriage (and indeed Grace gave Liz to understand that her sister was a loose character long before she fell in with Geoffrey Chown).

Geoffrey, in answer to these appeals, over and over again assured her that he was already married (reminding her more than once that he had told her so all along), but at last gave in after his weak and reckless manner to her proposal to go through the form of marriage with her in a registry-office to satisfy her father before his death, and so secure to her a place in his will.

Never was there an apter illustration of the Italian proverb, "*Tanto buon che val niente*," than this easy-led, easy-natured, and easy-principled Geoffrey Guard. He never could say "no" to himself, or to anyone else, and, therefore, he agreed at last to this very dangerous proposal out of mere and sheer weakness, weariness of worry, and readiness to oblige.

These were the letters Liz spelled out painfully without an idea of their being Archie's father's, until Grace showed her the photograph of the wedding-party; then at once she recognised the bridegroom. She had seen at the vicarage not only a portrait of him in oils, but more than one photograph, and she had no doubt now at all of the bearing upon Archie's fortunes

of the story she had just heard and read. She promised Grace that she would get her some money—how, she did not say—if she was allowed to take away the letters and the photograph, and Grace greedily accepted the offer.

Through the photograph Archie identified Sir Arthur Denzil as Smart, the groomsmen, and Smart, glad enough to make terms with him now that Dick was out of the running, promised to procure Archie's mother's marriage certificate for fifty pounds. In fact, Smart had been in his better days Geoffrey Guard's bosom friend, and as such had officiated at both weddings as groomsmen. Geoffrey considered that he might hereafter, if necessary, bring forward the fact of his having the same groomsmen at both as a proof that the second was a mere mock marriage. His marriage to Archie's mother had been clandestine, and kept for some time secret through her terror of her brother James.

MODERN TRAVEL.

ONCE upon a time—it is not so long ago, but then social changes march on rapid feet—man was a sedentary animal, and woman still more so. Your traveller, the man who daringly and persistently went forth, was a phenomenon. We know how "Abyssinian" Bruce was treated by stay-at-home listeners when he came boastfully back to relate legends of mid-African manners and customs. We do not know how Herodotus, or Marco Polo, or Mandeville fared; but now everyone comes out of the chimney nook, and is, in a sense, a traveller. But ancient voyagers—and we may call Sentimental and Reverend Lawrence Sterne ancient for our purpose, and Oliver Goldsmith and Arthur Young—had, at least, some difficulties to surmount, and they did see something of the country into which they adventured their persons, purses, and portmanteaux. The old style of travel brought the traveller into contact with the people through the midst of whom he had to thread his way. Sterne's colloquy with the Franciscan friar at Calais, the alms refused, and then eagerly tendered, the touching words, the French shrug, the little horn box, the pinch of snuff, sound like an echo from a vanished past. As impossible is that prettier picture of our Milton, not yet a poet, not yet blind, having in early youth the King's royal permission to travel, despite the

grudging opposition of the merchants of the Staple and the Steelyard, and, as he lay asleep on the bank of a high road in North Italy, kissed by an Italian countess who had stopped her carriage because of the beauty and the forlornness of the slumbering English boy.

Things move now in very prosaic grooves. Travel is an accepted fact—a sort of epidemic which sets in every spring, and becomes most virulent during the sultry months of the late summer. And those who practise it are expected, by those who make a livelihood out of their peripatetic habits, as regularly as the pilchard shoals off the Cornish coast, or the herrings that dapple the North Sea. Railway and steamboat companies allow a large margin on the credit side of their books, on account of the roving habits of modern society. There will, on Bank Holidays, and at certain festivals, such as Easter, be migratory rushes of short duration. During all the fine weather, from what the almanack calls spring to what the almanack dubs autumn, there will be a steady flow, with as steady a reflux of the wave. And, the Parliamentary Session and the London season over, there will be a holiday exodus, more or less stupendous, according to the condition of the money-market. Englishmen are not now, by any means, the only tourists. Time was when they were, and still the memory of dead-and-gone Milors, who came with four post-horses and mighty whip-cracking to pay such bills as dowried the daughters and provided for the younger sons of fortunate innkeepers, gilds the British name. There are yet fossil waiters, queer old French touts, and queerer Italian ciceroni, who turn up their noses at cosmopolitan wanderers, and try, like the Giant Fee-Faw-Fum, to smell the blood of an Englishman, but with no malignant purpose, whenever fresh cargoes of humanity heave in sight. French journalists yet complain that at Boulogne-sur-Mer, "Ah, monsieur is a foreigner, then?" is addressed to every glib and shabby Parisian who looks aghast at being accosted in "pigeon" English. But, as a general rule, all are sheep that come to be shorn along the principal routes of European progress. There is a standard of Procrustes to which modern wayfarers are made to conform. The same severe tariff as to prices applies to all nations. A colourless cosmopolitan cookery, a cold uniformity of discomfort, and the wooden monotony of a frigid reception, await all alike.

Perhaps, of everyday travellers, the American is the most, and the German the least popular. For Herr Müller and Herr Schülze, quite independent of the fact that they are hated by all French-speaking people on account of the bitter humiliation of the war of 1870, want to save their thalers and silbergroschen. And the first requisite is, now, that the birds of passage should pay their way without haggling or hesitation. The Spaniard and the Italian are thriftier still, but give less offence, for there is a general belief that the poor Southerners have lean purses, and then they want so little, and slink off so humbly to inferior accommodation and stinted meals. Whereas, of all nomads the German—who, as often as not, is a German Jew—is the noisiest and the most self-assertive, while he alone has the daring to dispute an overcharge, and to fight battles royal over the sum total of a bill. But the silent, sprucely attired, melancholy-eyed American is the pet of waiters, and the cynosure of landlords. He submits his fleece to the shearer more passively than Europeans do, and perhaps cares less for the result of the operation, since he has come to the Old World to spend so many dollars, and will not be sorry to be at home again in Chicago, or Baltimore, or Brooklyn, when the big pile set aside for the grand tour in the Old World has melted like snow in sunshine. He takes counsel with the knights of the napkin as to the repast he shall order, and the brand of the champagne to be uncorked for him; needs an interpreter everywhere; pays huge bills and distributes lavish largesse unmurmuringly; and seems rather glad than not when he steams forth into the Atlantic, homeward bound.

Next to Americans and Russians, the latter of whom are presumably princes or conspirators, and spend liberally, French tourists are, perhaps, what hotel-keepers and their satellites prize the most. For the instinct of economy, which is second nature, if not first, with a Frenchman at home, seems quite to desert him when he has become migratory. And then there are now such numbers of French whose incomes are really handsome, and who have an almost morbid fear of appearing parsimonious when en voyage. Perhaps it would jeopardise M. Blot's credit on the Paris Bourse, or damage M. le Comte Bouchardot de Garenne's claim to be made a Prefect or Councillor General, if he appeared to care whether he paid twenty francs or two for

what he wanted. If he has an establishment of servants with him, he takes first-class tickets cheerfully for them all, and, indeed, there might be a revolt of the kitchen if he did not. He hires the best rooms in the best hotels, rents sumptuous villas at Nice or Cannes, allows his woman-kind to run up any bills with milliner, linendraper, or coachbuilder, and seems as oblivious of the value of money as his shrewd old grandfather was keenly alive to it. Sometimes there is a crash and a suicide, or a prosecution for forgery. Sometimes speculation, Government favour, or a lucky windfall, enable the rash Gaul to pull through. On that greatest of gaming-tables, the Parisian Stock Exchange, somebody must win. And aunts, and uncles, and the oddest and wealthiest of old cousins have a convenient knack of dying, just when a trump card is wanted to stem the tide of ill-luck. But, at any rate, the Frenchman of any rank or position, who has once turned his back on the Lares and Penates of domestic prudence, spends and spares not, and the fast accumulating wealth of France has helped to inflate prices throughout Europe.

The grumbling British paterfamilias is not now of high account, as he was for some thirty years after Waterloo: He is not "Milor" any more; he is not rich and generous; and there are even doubts of his solvency. The possession of a wife and daughters, a good deal of luggage, and a choleric temper, are no longer regarded as certificates of station and substance. The roving bachelor is suspected of being a Cook's tourist if he cannot talk French, and a commercial traveller if he can. Even the queer old maiden ladies who range about in pairs, with green bonnets and blue "uglies," and red Murrays in the grasp of their lean fingers, are now regarded as the advanced guard of a possible Salvation Army, ready at any moment to strike up a hymn, preach a sermon, occasion a riot, and bring discredit on the town. A marked alteration in the market value of the Englishman abroad has been noticed within the last six or seven years. It may be doubted whether, out of Nice and Pau and a few Riviera resorts, the islanders were ever really popular. But now that they spend less and exact more than Russians, French, and Yankees, it is not surprising that their national peculiarities should be viewed through severe spectacles.

In one respect we English yet command

attention. There are so many of us that it is worth the while of Boniface and his army of waiters, of railway-guards, and porters, and commissionaires, and coachmen to try to catch us, if not to please us. It was for English visitors, not for Germans, and still less for French, that the huge caravanserais of Switzerland were erected. It is worth noticing that a great change has come over the country which has been aptly styled the playground of Europe. Twenty years ago the Swiss monster hotel was justly considered the best of its kind. Nowhere else were the accommodation and the attendance so good. There was a sort of Arcadian simplicity, such as is yet found in old inns of the Oberland, about the people. They were cordial and polite, and the bill—that snake-in-the-grass which often embitters the feeling between host and guest—was reasonably moderate. All that has been changed. A younger generation of hotel-keepers has grown up to inherit the paternal keys, and it has occurred to Young Switzerland that the best way to squeeze a profit out of travellers is to bully them. All individuality is to be strictly repressed, as it was in German hostels when Erasmus was a young student. Pilgrims may scramble for rooms, be thankful when they get what they want, and meek and mute when they do not, or it will be the worse for them. There is food in plenty at the gigantic table d'hôte; otherwise, let the laggard wait for the next meal. Vin ordinaire, called by eight different names, and at various prices on the wine-list, should content the thirstiest. There must be no complaints, no whims and fancies. Not every Swiss landlord has the spirit to summon his retainers, and hurl recalcitrant visitors down a flight of stone steps, as happened two or three years since at the Righi. But it is not for nothing that the innkeeper is a magistrate, judge, and landamman: perhaps, the grandest personage in his commune, perhaps in his canton. He is more secure in his hotel than was Front-de-Bœuf in his robber-castle. It would take a combined crusade to get at him, and it is fortunate that he is merciful, if morose, for he is virtually above the law.

One alteration for the worse there is, as a result of the extraordinary and increasing number of modern travellers, and that is that nobody expects or cares to see the same faces a second time. Once every hostelry had its valued list of clients—

old customers, at the sound of whose names the flat-capped chef did his best concoct culinary marvels, while the dangers-on of the establishment brightened with smiles that were not wholly merenary. But now a landlord's gratitude merely means a lively expectation of future favours, not to be expected from old customers, but from their fellow-countrymen. When Herr Schwindel, or M. Obetout, of the Grand Hotel Universel, advertises that he trusts for the continued support of his esteemed patrons, Boniface merely means that he hopes more English and Americans will bring grist to the mill. He would not, personally, know a new guest from an old one, nor would his waiters, who change places every three months or so. A big, noisy caravanserai is simply a sort of Stock Exchange, or mart, where food and lodging are paid for at rates exceptionally dear, but where considerable outlay is necessary on the part of the capitalist, who keeps the concern afloat.

A vigorous effort has been made, under the auspices of Pullman, and doubtless under those of imitators less appropriately named, to abolish inns altogether, and to make a train, what a ship is, the temporary home of the passenger. Unfortunately, transport by land is very costly, and the accommodation thus offered to the mere public is on a very contracted scale. Rich men, to whom "a guinea or five guineas—ten, if you like," represents their hazy good-humour as to expenditure, can get a good deal in the way of spacious saloons and snug sleeping-apartments, along with high speed, in England. But on the Continent, where railway managers have the most niggardly notions both as to the rapidity of a journey and the amount of cubic feet necessary for every one of the live parcels they convey, it is needful to be very rich indeed if you want luxuries. An evil eye was always cast by French station-masters even on the common coupés, the fares for which were half as much again as those of ordinary first-class carriages. The coupé was a privilege. It was contrary to equality, an insult to the glorious principles of 1789. To annoy the invalids and timid ladies who hired them was deemed a patriotic act.

Sometimes a rough commis-voyageur, perfumed with garlic and bad cigars, was lawlessly thrust in. Sometimes the secluded ones were prohibited from purchasing an extra ticket, so as to quarter a supernumerary

member of the family elsewhere. The suggestion that privacy and quiet were desired, was resented, a few years since, as a violation of the rights of man. Now there are Pullman's cars on the trunk lines of railroad, but these are conducted on American, not English, principles. Those who have sound constitutions, full purses, and phlegmatic nerves, can, doubtless, eat, sleep, and journey in gregarious proximity, but if elbow-room or repose be desired, neither the *wagon-lits* nor the *wagon-salons* are quite satisfactory. Travellers are too closely packed; the arrangements too much resemble those of a peripatetic wild-beast show, while of pickpockets there is some fear. Of course, even on the Continent, money will smooth away asperities of travel, but then the golden balm must be lavishly and persistently applied. The most comfortable traveller of our own time is a mighty Jewish financier. Foreign journalists fall into ecstasies over the royal carriage in which the Prince of Wales speeds from Calais to Berlin, or the Riviera and back again, and which, handsome and commodious as it is, is a mere item of the rolling-stock of the South-Eastern Railway Company. But the Viennese Baron Rothschild is famous for possessing a sort of yacht on wheels, that boasts of all the splendid accommodation of the costliest pleasure vessel, with immunity from that awkward sea-sickness which sometimes mars the zest of maritime revels. All royal or imperial conveyances pale before this moving palace, with its staff of servants, its squadron of cooks, its cellars, storerooms, and gorgeous apartments. The golden Baron can, as he did when he attended the lengthy representations at Wagner's gigantic theatre at Bayreuth, not only be independent of hotel-keepers, but give magnificent banquets to a large circle of discriminating friends without quitting the richly draped walls of his temporary home.

There are those—chiefly idle young ladies with imaginations excited by a long course of novel-reading—who deplore the prosaic tameness of our present locomotion, and would feel it a refreshing incident were Claude Duval to canter up, pistol in hand, or Dick Turpin to command a halt and lighten the purses of the company. But they are wrong, for it is very easy to be robbed nowadays. If there are few highwaymen—and out of Spain and America there are next to none—there is a plurality of pickpockets (English for the most part) to infest every main line abroad. Also the

shameless plunder of tourists' luggage which goes on in Italy, and even more on that great iron road which leads from Paris to Cannes, Nice, and Monaco, has never been paralleled. Guards, porters, and petty officials must make an exceedingly comfortable thing of rifled trunks, missing jewel-cases and desks, or cash-boxes burst open as the train speeds merrily southwards. It is of little use to pour indignant complaints into the ear of a bewildered commissary of police, or of station masters, who shrug their shoulders as they remark that little misfortunes of this sort happen daily. The higher authorities can take no cognisance of thefts which may have happened anywhere during a transit of six hundred miles, and the Olympian calm of the railway directors is not to be disturbed by the peevish complaints of those who have been robbed by their uniformed and salaried servants.

The truth is, that modern travel, as perforce conducted by those who are not exceptionally and remarkably rich, has an increasing tendency to resolve itself into a rush and a scramble. Individuality is being stamped out by the Procrustean action of a system of wagon-lits, through trains, and phalanstère sleeping-cars on the Gallicised Pullman principle. There was ten times as much liberty with the old posting plan, or even with the tardy vetturino. These modern systems of wholesale travel represent a temporary Socialism, in which, as in all communistic arrangements, the wishes of the units are ignored in the supposed interests of the commonweal.

There are, no doubt, a few privileged persons who derive additional advantages from the recent developments of, and restrictions on, travel. A rich man, half a century since, felt that he got his money's worth for his money. He paid largely, but the four horses to his carriage, the mounted courier spurring furiously in front, perhaps the fourgon of heavy baggage rumbling on behind, the obsequious host, and the elaborate preparations at the hotel, gave him something real and tangible for his disbursements. Few voyagers now, save kings and crown princes, order a special train. There are many who could afford it, but they are ashamed to ape the ways of royal highnesses, and so forego to use the talisman of the purse. Baron Rothschild, of Vienna, whom we have already mentioned, may

be taken as a type of those farsighted capitalists who have the courage, not of their opinions, but of their vast means. We cannot all be Rothschilds, but it is possible that something better than a promiscuous scramble may yet be the outcome of the feverish restlessness of to-day.

A LADY'S LIFE IN MANITOBA.

A GREAT many different people have been writing and speaking about Manitoba. Delegate farmers have waxed eloquent over its resources. Newspaper correspondents have described its development. Land-agents have painted glowing pictures of its progressive possibilities in more or less veracious pamphlets. For the last few years it has become the goal of a large and still increasing band in that wonderful Western exodus, which is going on so close under our eyes that we hardly recognise the greatest national movement of the century. And now that tens of thousands of young Englishmen are setting their faces towards the Canadian North-West, I think their mothers and sisters may care to read a plain unvarnished tale of the conditions of a settler's life there, from one who is neither special correspondent, nor land-agent, nor vagrant politician, but who has looked at things with a woman's eyes, and from a woman's standpoint, during the year she has spent on the prairie as a settler's wife.

My home is a log-house, consisting of three rooms. We are about sixty miles from Winnipeg, and eighteen miles from the nearest railway-station. In winter, however—i.e., for six months of the year—the snow closes our shorter road, and we can only travel along a trail, which is kept open by more constant traffic; this makes the journey to the station six miles longer, or twenty-four miles in all. The nearest store is fifteen miles away, but it seldom contains what I want, and the next nearest store is at the railway-station. Our nearest town is Portage La Prairie, but it lies farther west, and for practical purposes Winnipeg is where we have to go to buy an axe or to see a doctor. There is no Protestant church within thirty-five miles of our house—but we occasionally visit a Roman Catholic mission-station about fifteen miles away, on the shore of Lake Manitoba. I found this settlement a curiously interesting place. The local

patois is a mixture—one-third French, and two-thirds Cree. Round the little wooden church are clustered the log-huts of half-bred Indian hunters and fishermen. They are being slowly tamed and civilised by the patient labour and sacrifice of three or four mission priests, who spend their lives among the hardships of this desolate spot. A few traders were almost the only white men they saw until last year, when some Galway fishermen arrived, sent out under Mr. Tuke's emigration scheme. I am glad to say that the priests have gained a great hold on the Indians in this our nearest village; and when I have been driving there, and heard the mission bell ringing for vespers across the prairie, no ecclesiastical difference could hinder my respect for this outpost of faith set in the wilderness.

But fifteen miles is too far to go often; indeed, my next-door neighbour, four miles away, is not near enough to encourage morning calls. And for nearly four months last winter I was not well enough to go out, and consequently did not see a woman. This was not such a loss as it appears. The population round us chiefly consists of half-breeds and Indians, with a sprinkling of English settlers. They are most hospitable, but extremely rough, dirty, and uncivilised. Our post-office is four miles away, and we can send off and also fetch letters once a week. Let me describe the interior of this post-office, one day last winter when I had occasion to call there. The postmaster is a very rough Canadian; his wife is a half-breed, a tall, handsome woman. When we drove up she was out of doors in the snow, chopping firewood. Her lord and master was sitting in his only downstairs room, with his feet on the stove and a pipe in his mouth. In the same room, which was bare of carpet or curtain, and contained the family bed, were three little children, a boy, aged seven, swearing lustily, a girl, about five, sucking her fingers, who began to howl as soon as I spoke, and a baby of two years, seated in a frying-pan on the floor, engaged in carefully wrapping up its bare feet in a dish-cloth. Their mother followed us into the house, and promptly seizing the handle of the pan, proceeded to eject the baby, and to wipe out the pan with the afore-mentioned cloth. Next she broke about a dozen eggs into the pan, fried them, and, having made tea and produced her solitary teaspoon, she invited my husband and myself to partake, or, as she phrased it,

to "sit in" with the family. It is needless to add that, after what I had just witnessed, I declined the hospitality as graciously as I knew how. This is my nearest female neighbour.

Another interesting house is the home of a justice of the peace for the province, who is a settler near us. He is a Scotchman, and can quote Alison's History of Europe. His household comprises himself and his wife—a half-breed woman—a married daughter, her husband and their two children, two other grown-up daughters, a son of fifteen, another of ten, and two young men lodgers. The house is a log cabin, and consists simply of one fair-sized room. It is scarcely a cause for surprise that the whole of this family suffered from scarlet-fever last spring. The only wonder is that they all recovered.

In such a thinly settled country it is naturally very difficult to get any sort of female help. Even in Winnipeg servants are hard to find, and when found are of such temper and quality, that I consider the lady most fortunate who can do without one. A friend of mine there paid thirty-six pounds a year to a very inferior servant, whose husband (an artisan) was besides allowed to live with her in the house. And I have known this man smoke a cigar in the hall with his hat on. When his wife left at two days' notice, he explained that he was sorry to inconvenience my friend, as she suited his wife very well, but that she (his wife) was "leaving to better herself." From thirty to forty pounds is an ordinary salary for a domestic servant in Winnipeg. An hotel cook expects from sixty to a hundred pounds, or more still if the hotel be large. Under these circumstances, it is hopeless to think of a servant on the prairie, so I do the work myself, with occasional masculine aid. I have to make even the bread and the butter, and prepare everything that is eaten. If I drive twelve miles with linen, and again the same distance to fetch it home, I can, by dint of great persuasion and pretty speeches, occasionally induce a half-breed woman to wash it. She charges me four shillings a dozen, and sends it back clean, certainly, but neither ironed nor even folded. So I generally manage, by the help of patience and a washing-machine, to do everything for myself. We have to use the most curious makeshifts in this out-of-the-way land. My bread-trencher is a thin section sawn from the

middle of a tree, with the bark left on round the edge, and the top smoothed with sand-paper. My washstand is formed of an empty barrel, with boards laid over the top, and covered with cretonne.

Of course, on the prairie we are our own landlords, and live rent-free on our own homestead. Taxes don't amount to much, and food is no great expense, as game of all sorts abounds. Fish, too, is easy to get, as we are not far from Lake Manitoba, and in winter we can buy frozen fish from the Indians at a trifling cost. Prairie-chicken, wild duck, partridge, snipe, and plover are very plentiful, and may be had for the shooting. When I say that I believe there is hardly a fenced farm between us and the North Pole, it is plain that poaching is an unknown crime. We can also trap and snare hares and rabbits, and shoot jumping deer occasionally. I have tried what was once a favourite old English dish—roast bittern—and find it beyond praise. Animals of most sorts are in the neighbourhood. We can sit at night by the fire and hear a pack of prairie-wolves go by in full cry across the snow. Timber-wolves are scarcer; black bears are scarcer still, though more than one has been tracked and shot within a mile of our house. I have myself seen where Master Bruin had scooped out the ant-hills for his dinner the day before.

Then we get far too many skunks, besides foxes, badgers, and ermine—which make sad work in one's pantry—with other members of the rat and squirrel tribe too numerous to mention. Forty miles north and north-west of us, you may find moose and elk, and farther still, buffalo. We have some very large birds of prey. An eagle-hawk shot last summer on the section next ours, measured five feet nine inches across the wings. Another hawk measured five feet eleven inches, and some of the owls are nearly as large. In winter jays trouble us a good deal; they come just outside the house to peck up every stray crumb of food, and make a most disagreeable chatter. I have only seen three snakes on the prairie—they were of the kind called garter-snakes, with beautifully bright skins. Insects of various kinds infest the ground in summer, many like our English insects, but some strangers to me.

All the country between us and Winnipeg is flat, and not at all picturesque, though by going as far west as Brandon, you come to "rolling" prairie. In early

summer the ground is carpeted with the loveliest wild flowers. We are fortunate in having land which is nicely timbered. It not only gives us a pleasanter prospect than the dreadful monotony of a treeless flat, but it also entirely supplies us with firing. This is a great consideration in a country where wood is often expensive to buy, though the climate makes it a prime necessity of life.

And this brings me to speak about my experience of the climate of Manitoba. The variations of temperature are very great. I have seen the thermometer stand at one hundred and twenty-five degrees inside a tent in summer, and at fifty-eight degrees below zero, or ninety degrees below freezing point, outside the house in winter. Though such figures are hardly touched once a year, yet they serve to indicate an extraordinary range of temperature. Such Arctic cold would be unendurable if the air were not so wonderfully dry and clear—and often very still—that it does not seem half as cold as it really is. I may mention one curious instance of this: though I always suffered terribly from chilblains in the old country, I have never felt the least symptom of one in Manitoba. Then the changes of weather are not generally very sudden; the heat and cold are fairly regular, and in mid-seasons the thermometer does not fluctuate much. Still, it is not easy for English lady readers to imagine the conditions of living in such a climate.

Perhaps a few homely details may best serve to illustrate what winter in Manitoba means. The snow outside our house was from six to ten feet deep, from November to April. Travelling on wheels is, of course, out of the question, and we always used a sleigh. The snow gets caked and frozen hard and smooth along the trails, and even if, as sometimes happens, the horse sinks, and you upset, still a clean snow-drift is better than mud to fall on. I tried to wear boots last November, and one of my feet froze. Moccasins, made by Indians of moose-skin, are used instead of shoes to cover the feet, which are first cased in several pairs of stockings. For travelling on foot snow-shoes are best. These, too, are of Indian make. They are generally flat frames of thin wood—from two to six feet long—pointed in front and rear, and filled up with interlaced deer-sinew. The moccasined foot of the wearer is tied on in the middle of the snow-shoe, and after a little practice it is easy, so equipped,

to walk five miles an hour across the snow. There is a snow-shoeing club in Winnipeg, where the art is taught and practised. Mitts supersede gloves during the winter, as if the fingers are separated they generally freeze.

We were forced to melt snow for all the water we used last winter. The cold was so intense, that when melted snow water was poured from the boiler into a pail, and taken at once across to the stable, the ice on it frequently had to be broken with a stick before the cattle could drink; it froze so hard whilst being carried a distance of some sixty yards in the open air. My husband would sometimes come in from a short visit to the stockyard with his nose frozen; indeed, it is rather a common sight to see people partly frozen. The part affected turns as white as marble, and loses all feeling. Unless you see yourself in a glass, or are told of it, you are not conscious of being frozen. In this plight it is best not to go near a fire, as sudden thawing is very painful. People generally try friction, rubbing themselves with snow, or, better still, with paraffin oil. Occasionally, when one is frozen and far from help, the part frozen, if an extremity, will snap off. Last year a man living about thirty miles from us was told that his ear was frozen; he put up his hand to feel, and the ear dropped off in his hand. Limbs sometimes have to be amputated from severe frost-bites. My kitten's ears froze, and broke off last winter, and a neighbour's pony lost its ears in the same way.

I was surprised when I first found the mustard freeze in my mustard-pot, which stood a foot from the kitchen stove-pipe, and two feet above the stove, where there was a blazing fire all day and every day through the winter. Yet the mustard froze between every meal. Bread froze if left for half an hour in a room without a fire. I once left a pitcher full of milk in the kitchen all night, and next morning on trying to move it the pitcher fell to pieces, and left the milk standing solid in its place. We could buy frozen milk by the pound, frozen so intensely, that when I put a lump of it in a tin into the oven, or on the top of the stove, the first part that melted would burn to the tin before the rest of it had thawed. I managed to melt it by first chopping the ice-milk into very small pieces. Clothes which had been washed froze before I could hang them on the line to dry. I used to leave them out two or three nights for the snow and

frost to bleach, and they always needed thawing and drying again when they were brought indoors. Even after being damped and folded they would freeze together; and when I have been ironing the top of a pocket-handkerchief, the lower part would freeze on to the table, which was close by a roaring wood fire. Ironing under these conditions is rather slow work.

Such stories must sound almost incredible except to those who, like myself, have witnessed the facts, though, of course, only in the most severe weather. A bearded Englishman, who stayed with us last winter, was often forced, when he came indoors, to thaw the icicles from his moustache, which froze to his beard, and hindered him from talking to us. A pail of water left in the kitchen all night, would freeze solid to the bottom before morning. This happened every time one was left, for two months. It is disappointing to lovers of skating that the outdoor ice is completely spoilt by snow, which begins to fall as soon as the hard frost sets in. Though I lived within easy reach of Lake Manitoba, which is one hundred and thirty miles long, and was frozen hard for six months last season, I never once had my skates on. There are several covered rinks in Winnipeg, which are flooded, and so renewed every night.

In such a climate everyone who can afford it is dressed in fur. Seal, beaver, and otter-skins are most fashionable. Ordinary people are content with bear, racoon, or buffalo. The Winnipeg policemen all dress in buffalo coats down to their heels in winter, and almost every house contains at least one buffalo robe or rug. These cost from two to five pounds each, and are used for camp-bedding and driving-wraps. The keenest wind cannot pierce them.

Winter is, of course, not equally severe throughout. Part of my description applies only to its colder half. But to a woman the most trying part of a winter in Manitoba is not its severity—for you live in a warm house—but its length. Snow lay on the ground last season for six months and a half, and the great lakes were frozen for the same period. This sounds almost unbearably tedious to English ears; and one's eyes grow very weary of the bare, blank whiteness, and long for something green to look at; yet the bright, clean, still frosts, with brilliant sunshine, glorious skies, and moonlit,

aurora-coloured nights, have great compensations of their own. A blizzard (i.e. a strong, keen, bone-piercing storm of wind with more or less snow) keeps everyone indoors until its rather rare visit is over. But in spite of every inconvenience, outdoors and indoors, of the winter-time, I say deliberately that I would rather pass three winters on the prairie in Manitoba than one summer.

During the three summer months the scorching heat and occasional parching winds might be borne, were it not for the terrible plague of mosquitoes which infests the whole province—bad in towns, but unspeakable on the prairie. I have sometimes been driving in the cool of a summer's evening—and the evenings and nights of the hottest days are always deliciously cool—when I could not see my pony's head through the dense cloud of mosquitoes which at sundown emerge from the shade where they take refuge all day, and almost darken the air. They are rather smaller editions of our common gnat, but the irritation produced by their stings is sometimes past endurance. I do not wonder that Mr. Archibald Forbes speaks of mosquitoes on the Danube, "whose size and viciousness are only to be found equalled in Manitoba." The implied tribute to our North-Western insect is thoroughly deserved.

I have tried most of the recommended remedies without finding anything even to alleviate the misery caused by these pests. A mixture of castor-oil and tar smeared over the body is said to be the only sure preventive. This remedy seems as bad as the disease, and I have not tested it yet, but the consciousness of a hundred separate stings on one hand, and of a face swollen to double its usual size, is enough to make one glad to try any prescription whatsoever.

The first frost kills all the mosquitoes, sand-flies, etc., wholesale, and brings in six weeks Indian summer—the loveliest weather imaginable, fit for the Valley of Avignon or the Lotus Eaters' Paradise—when one's chief desire is to live constantly out-of-doors. Heavy rains fall in September, but when the grass dries again, and before the snow covers it, prairie fires light the country round. If a man throws down the match which has lit his pipe, he may start a blaze which will run along the ground for miles. From our home I have counted seven different fires round the horizon at once. The first snow stops

them all for six months till the spring thaw. Then, when the dead grass of the last autumn has dried in the sun, they are as numerous as ever. Great care is needed to keep safe the houses, which are all built of wood, and thatched with reed or shingles, and, in that dry atmosphere, very easily catch fire. The best precaution is to choose a still, dry day, and yourself to burn slowly and carefully a broad belt of dry grass all round your homestead; this leaves nothing for succeeding fires to catch, and they cannot cross it.

I have drawn a one-sided picture. Other and cleverer persons have told the rest of the tale. I need not try and describe over again the boundless spaces of prairie soil, the rich fertility of the Red River Valley, the phenomenal growth of a New England in the great North-West. I have tried to set down a few of the conditions of living in this land of the future. Perhaps I have been able to notice some things which only a woman's eye has the power of seeing. Certainly I am afraid this paper makes too much of the isolation, the hardship, the climatic difficulties of living on the prairie. The isolation, and hardship, and climate are not exaggerated, but it is not easy to express in words the very great counterpoise which helps to make these things bearable. There is a freshness, a spontaneity, a freedom, an absence of convention and constraint, which seem to breathe in the bright, clear air of Manitoba. The temper and spirit of the place is so free, so cheery, so energetic, that it can afford to laugh at disagreeables. It may be rough, but it is certainly wholesome, and coming to it from modern English city life is like turning to the Percy Ballads after vain attempts to comprehend the sonnets of Mr. Rossetti.

I cannot conclude without testifying of the Canadians that they are as kind-hearted and hospitable a people as I ever wish to meet. The way in which they welcome English settlers, by their efforts to make them feel at home, is very pleasing, if not always quite successful. I have received more kindness from strangers in Canada than in any of the other countries where I have had opportunity of judging of hospitality.

A DAWN VISION.

IN the dim dawn light, when the air was chill,
And all the valleys veiled in silver mists,
There stood before me, 'neath the paling stars,
One calm, and strong, and tender, with grand eyes
Which saw beyond the things of sense and time,

And mighty wings that cleft the realms of space
 As the great eagle cleaves the upper air.
 His touch was gentle as the loving hand
 Of a fond mother, and his deep low voice
 Was like a lullaby that soothed and hushed
 Where'er it fell, to glad or dreamless rest.
 His step was noiseless; brightly o'er his head
 Rested the radiance of triple stars,
 With sapphire, diamond, and ruby light
 Resplendent, and upon his ebon hair
 A coronet of deathless amaranths.
 He moved amongst vast cities—entering
 The palace and the garret—calm alike
 Amidst the splendour of palatial homes
 And the bare den, unlovely, airless, dark,
 Unfit for aught that claims the right to live.
 He softly entered isolated homes
 In woods, and vales, and plains, and mountain tops,
 And ever from the palace and the hut
 He chose the best and noblest, and the rest
 He heeded not, nor touched. As the pure breath
 Of summer night after the heated air
 Of crowded rooms—as a clear palm-girt pool
 To wanderers in the desert—as the voice
 Of one we love, and trust, when all our being
 Shrinks back with fear, or quails in agony,
 Was the calm presence of the one who stood
 Before me 'neath the paling of the stars.
 I laid upon my heart his strong right hand,
 I looked into his calm and steadfast eyes,
 And gently questioned, saying: "Art thou Death?"
 And he: "Not so; Death sweeps with sickle keen
 The harvest field of all material being,
 Save only they, the fittest, whom I claim,
 And claiming, dower with immortality.
 On these he lays no hand for evermore,
 For through the endless æons they are mine."
 Then hearing him I loved him, and I said:
 "How knowest thou, ruler great and wonderful,
 Where thou may'st find, and finding, claim thine
 own?"

And he made answer: "Wheresoe'er they be,
 Ever upon their heads, their hands, their hearts,
 Radiant or faint, together or apart,
 I see the latent dawning light of stars—
 Such as above me in their threefold light
 Do shine eternally. Who has them not
 I leave to the great kindly reaper, Death,
 Throughout all worlds." Then spake I once
 again:

"What are the stars of light that mark thine own?
 And who art thou, thus wise and wonderful?"
 And he: "The stars are love, and light, and power,
 And I the Lord and Angel of Transition."

OUR SHINING RIVER.

II.

AFTER all, Charley Pyecroft's message proved easier to deliver than I had expected. Rebecca was partly prepared for some revelation of the kind, and received the news of her lover's folly with courage and a sturdy kind of philosophy. "Poor Charley, he is so easily led away." This was all the girl had to say in way of reproach. But why should he avoid her on that account? Charley knew well enough that he would be welcome to her, for all his ill-luck. But when it came to the suggestion that as Charley's only chance in life depended on his uncle, and that there was nothing left for him but to fall in with the family arrangement as to marrying his cousin, while Miss Thomas

would be well rid of such an unsatisfactory wooer, to all this Rebecca showed a firm front of refusal. At all events she would listen to nothing except from Charley's own lips. If he came to her and told her that he had repented of his promise to her, and had ceased to care for her, then it would be a question to her whether she should release him, but she declined to discuss the matter with anybody else. In my heart I felt that the girl was right, and so I undertook to find Charley and bring him back.

"I sha'n't be angry with him, and pa won't either," added Rebecca graciously; "and you will both spend the rest of the day with us, and we'll just about enjoy ourselves."

Appealed to by his daughter, Mr. Thomas cordially seconded her invitation. He had made up his mind, he owned, to spend a happy time, and if the Captain—a generic title of honour this, I find, up the river, without any particular reference to military rank—if the Captain, then, and his friend chose to join, why, the party would be all the merrier.

The prospect was not without its attractions, but then it was quite evident that Mr. Pyecroft was an essential part of the programme. If I brought him, I should be welcome, to use Mr. Thomas's expression, as the flowers in May, but, otherwise, I fancied that I should not be received with any enthusiasm.

It was pleasant to be once more on terra firma with the consciousness that the disagreeable part of my mission was over, and that I was free to enjoy the bright day and gay scene without the feeling of impending woes. I crossed the bridge, now crowded with vehicles and spectators, and pursued my way along the towing-path towards the island, whose white temple was shining in the distance. It was the hour when all thoughts were concentrated on luncheon. The boats that were moored two or three deep along the margin of the river, were nearly all converted into temporary banqueting-halls, where silver cups and huge three-handled mugs of brown ware were mantling to the brim with the juice of the grape tempered with sparkling waters, while tempting displays of every kind of eatable made the hungry wayfarer feel still more wolfishly inclined. Then the greensward itself was almost covered with impromptu tables, and under the shade of the trees more elaborate boards were spread, where footmen handed

round the dishes, and everything was as dull and solemn as in a Belgravian dining-room.

In all this throng, that, however, nowhere becomes a crowd, so bountiful is the space at everybody's disposal, it seemed doubtful whether I should ever find my friend. Perhaps I was not very anxious to find him; anyhow, I strolled up and down enjoying the sunshine and the varied scene without seeing a feather of Charley, when suddenly I was accosted by a brightly arrayed young man, whom I recognised as Rebecca's brother.

"Look here, I've found Pyecroft; and I want you to tell him we're waiting lunch for him."

Young Thomas had identified Pyecroft among a lot of people who had come down from London on a drag, and were picnicking on the top of it—an unaquatic proceeding which seems decidedly reprehensible, suggesting associations of race-courses and betting-rings, quite out of keeping with the green lawns and shining river.

Master Pyecroft was quaffing champagne-cup with his friends in the easy manner of one who hasn't a care in the world; but he came down quickly when I hailed him, and walked with me along the river-side till we were out of hearing of his friends.

"She is no end of a famous girl, that!" he pronounced when he heard my report of what had passed. And then, with his usual impulsiveness, he rushed for the little dingey that he had left among the rushes, and sent us across the river with a few strokes of the paddle.

Rebecca, from her watch-tower on the roof of the house-boat, saw us coming. She waved a handkerchief, while Charley replied by a flourish of his paddle. The girl looked radiant, with love and triumph in her eyes, as Charley leaped on board.

"What, you've been a-going it again, Captain!" cried Mr. Thomas, shaking his head, but grasping Charley warmly by the hand. "Well, never mind, my boy; I fancy mother's got something in the old stocking at home, that perhaps we can make it up; only no more of this kind of work, don't you see?"

Charley winced a little under this homely little lecture, but Rebecca came to the rescue, and carried him off to luncheon. The fare was excellent. Thomas, as an old caterer, had excelled himself. The good fare and good wine put everybody

into a good humour, while the river lapping at our elbows, and the sight of the gay carnival on its surface, inspired a pleasing kind of enthusiasm.

Why should we return to dusty streets, to hot, crowded rooms, and the rattle and worry of modern life? To float gently down the river from one pleasant stopping-place to another would surely be the most agreeable way of spending the next few weeks.

Even our gray and cautious-looking host seemed infected with the general enthusiasm. He proposed to have the Crab towed higher up the river, when the Regatta was over, and moor her under the woods below Streatley. He knew of famous swims where pike and perch were abundant, and where a rod more or less would make no difference in the abundant sport. There was a punt for those who liked fishing, and a light pair-oared boat for the lovers of boating, and a canoe for paddling about in, and the dingey for ferrying to and fro.

"If these delights thy soul can move,
Then come with me and be my love,"

warbled Rebecca, who had a voice corresponding with her physique, powerful, flexible, and thrilling.

"I don't think we shall get a better offer than that, Arthur," said Charley, laughing.

But although this was all very fine for Charley, I did not much relish my own part in the programme. For presently Rebecca carried off my friend to a shady corner on the roof—nautically, perhaps, it is a deck, but from the point of view of everyday life one would call it a roof—anyhow, there they sat in a snug corner, fenced off by tall fuchsias, pretending to take great interest in the races, with one correct card between them to peruse, which necessarily brought their heads close together, while their hands were entwined about a lead-pencil they held in common. My less pleasant lot was to make conversation with our worthy host, and to entertain the stout old lady, his worthy spouse. Mr. Thomas, however, soon had the field of conversation to himself, and presently began to wax confidential, as he expatiated upon future prospects.

"Where I look upon it is this," said Mr. Thomas, knocking out the ashes of his pipe, and then carefully refilling it. "I don't deny I might have done better for Rebecca in a worldly point of view, but then there's a lot in being a gentleman.

I never held much to this Australian scheme, and I'm not so sorry that our young squire has dropped his money. I'll buy my girl a nice little place on the river, where Master Charley can have his fishing and his shooting in a quiet sort of way, and she shall have him as much to herself as a little bird in a cage—all tied up, don't you see—stric'ly tied up. But what I'm ambitious for is my son Albert."

This was the youth in radiant garments, already brought upon the scene.

"Yes, for Albert," continued Mr. Thomas emphatically, "I own I do ambition. I mean my Albert to marry old Squire Pycroft's girl, and take his place among the nobles."

"Don't talk such nonsense, William!" here interposed Mrs. Thomas, who had before, by nods, and signs, and nudges, endeavoured in vain to check her husband's too expansive mood. "Why, William," she went on, "Squire Pycroft hates us all like poison."

"All the better, my dear," rejoined Mr. Thomas, unabashed but scowling; "for that's just what he has got to take. It's the girl as everything depends upon, and she don't hate us, never fear. That girl has been brought up in stric' seclusion, as you may say, and about the only pleasure she's had has been her little canoe on the river. Whence she sees our Albert, who is likewise fond of paddling about. And what more natural than she should take a fancy to him? So it strikes me we've got Squire Pycroft pretty straight. Dose number one, his nephew marries my girl. Dose number two, his daughter marries my boy. Which last is a choker."

Mr. Thomas here shook his head menacingly, and settled himself fiercely in his chair, as if challenging all comers to dispute his conclusions if they dared. But having listened to Mr. Thomas's conversation as long as politeness required, I left him to the enjoyment of his forecasts of the future, and spent the rest of the day in more congenial society.

That evening I was sitting alone in my own room, thinking how hot and dreary looked the London streets in contrast with the cool, inviting river. I seemed to see the shining river stretching before me in cool, inviting reaches, while the plash of oars sounded softly in the air, and there was a murmur of waters from the distant weir. Nor was I alone, for that moment a face fair and candid seemed to smile upon me, and eyes dark and lustrous shone

upon me with that wondrous softness in their depths that only love can give. And the face I saw was a visionary reproduction of the photograph I still carried in my pocket, the one I had appropriated which belonged to Charley Pycroft, and which represented the features of his cousin. As I looked at the photograph in its turn, the soft eyes, with the shade of melancholy in them, seemed to assume a new expression, resembling that of the picture in my mind's eye. I could not account for the impression that face had made upon me. I grew shamefully sentimental over it, and was sitting looking at the photograph in a way that my friends would have characterised as sadly spoony, when the door was thrown open, and I had only just time to hide the photograph under a book before Charley Pycroft burst in upon me.

"Here's a nice mess I'm in," he cried, flinging himself into an easy-chair by the window. "Everything arranged for a jolly time up the river with Rebecca, when I get this precious scrawl," and Charley flung a letter to me across the table. Charley called it a scrawl, but the writing seemed to me remarkably nice, firm, and round, but rather difficult to read from the letters being all very much alike. I could not even make out the signature, but I felt sure that the handwriting belonged to the girl of the photograph.

"DEAR COUSIN,"—the letter read when deciphered,—“Mamma bids me write, to say that we are going to make what mademoiselle calls a promenade on the water—a nice long one, beginning at the boat-house at home, and ending somewhere about Windsor. Mother says you must come, as she doesn't feel easy in a boat unless there is some skilful person to manage it. Also, if you happen to have a nice friend, who knows how to row, you can bring him with you. Don't disappoint us, as it will be much nicer if you come. Mrs. Boothby descended upon us this morning expressly to tell us she had met you on your way to Henley. So it is no use your writing to say you are 'out of town.'—Your affectionate cousin,

“CLAUDIA.”

"Well," I observed, looking up from the letter, "this is very lucky; you can row your cousin about all the morning, and when the shades of evening approach, seek the shelter of the house-boat, and bask in the smiles of Rebecca."

"Don't be a donkey," said Charley brusquely; "you see this is a serious scrape. The two parties will surely collide, and there will be an explosion prematurely, and an unpleasant esclandre."

I suggested that the manly course would be to write to Uncle Pyecroft, informing him of his nephew's engagement to Rebecca, and that, consequently, he could not join the party at Charlwood Hall. But Charley said that such a course was quite out of the question. Rebecca herself did not wish their engagement to be known at present, and it was of the utmost importance that Uncle Pyecroft should be kept in a good humour till Charley's affairs were settled. If he were angered he would throw the whole estate into Chancery, and there would be nothing left except for lawyers and creditors; while, if the matter were settled in a friendly way, there might be a considerable surplus for Charley's benefit. No; he could not afford to break altogether with Uncle Pyecroft. Hence he must temporise. And that brought him to the object of his visit, which was to persuade me to go down to Charlwood Hall in his stead, take the lead in the boating-party, and so contrive it—nothing could be easier when the leaders of each party were acting in concert—that the two expeditions should not clash on the route.

Now, this proposal curiously and completely chimed in with the object of my secret desire. The shining river, those deep, translucent eyes, seemed both to invite me. If there was anything underhand or unworthy in Charley's conduct, the responsibility did not fall upon me, and I certainly should do no harm by helping to avoid an unpleasant rencontre. And so I agreed to take charge of the Charlwood Hall party if that were agreeable to them; but, not caring to go to the Hall as an only half-invited guest, I would go down to Lechlade, and stay there, fishing and amusing myself as best I could. And Charley wrote that night to his aunt accordingly, recommending me as a steady and skilful pilot, and asking the party to pick me up at St. John's Lock, which is the first lock on the river, while he excused his own absence on the ground of engagements that could not be postponed.

Charley slept at my rooms that night, and we started together next morning from Paddington, but he left me at one of the riverside stations to join the Thomases,

and I journeyed on from Oxford with only chance companions by the quiet little single line that travels on through Witney to Fairford. It was the very prime of summer time, with a haze of soft luxurious heat over everything; the very name of Witney, suggestive of blankets and great-coats, seemed to intensify the feeling of heat, but all we saw of it was its fine old church among the elm-trees, with the broad walk from the station that leads past it to the town. Before we started again, quite a respectable procession of passengers could be seen marching along towards the church, apparently in response to the soft invitation of the bells. But this was no doubt an optical delusion. Everything about gave the impression of richness and plenty: the trees in full foliage, the cows lazily munching under their shade, the great cocks of hay, and the meadows newly shorn, and yet promising an abundant aftermath, while wild flowers grew luxuriantly on every bank, and the flower-beds at the stations were covered with luxuriant growth, borne down by rich blossoms. Then there was a delicious scent in the air combined of the fragrance of flowers and the scent of new milk and fresh-mown hay, and the little train as it meandered through the country seemed to brush against the hedgerows, and whisk among the branches of the trees. There was Bampton, where we stopped right in the fields among the hay, and Alvescot, known as Alscot, still among the fields, with a farmhouse peeping from the trees here and there; but these are cornfields now, and for a time we quit the jocund pastures for the toil and anxiety of the arable plains. But here is plenty too, and beauty in the great fields of grain, with the wheat in flower, and the stalks with a rich purple hue seen in the mass, all redolent with health and plenty.

And then comes Lechlade station, still among the fields, with a white, dusty road running through them, and a little omnibus waiting outside the station rather for the honour of the thing than in any expectation of passengers.

The arid, dusty road presently becomes cool and pleasant under the shadow of trees, with glimpses between of the grey old manor house, solid and square, with presently a twisted iron gate leading to a cool avenue where an old woman sits resting in the shade. And then comes the street of the town, the quiet, old-world little town, with its old inn that dates

from the Tudors, and its New Inn, at least a couple of centuries old. The lost footsteps of all these years have worn the roadway into a hollow, which gives the footpath on each side an air of dignity and elevation. The street widens out into something like a market-place, from which another thoroughfare issues at right angles, or, perhaps, it may be the same street which has taken a sudden twist, and in the angle is the churchyard-gate, with the tall spire rising above the trees. Then there are lanes running out here and there, with cottages on either hand, lanes that end in stiles and field-paths, or perhaps bring you by a sudden turn to the dusty road again, and here and there a pleasant country house, showing in an unexpected nook, with trim lawn and gay flower-beds—just such a snug retreat as our friend of the Crab and Flower-pot has found for himself hereabouts.

The first thing to be done is to find quarters for the night, and the buxom landlady of the inn trips in front of me, and leads the way to a big, half-empty room, with traces of former decorations on the wall, which suggest that this was once upon a time the assembly-room of the place. Now there are long tables set on trestles, and a few sheaves of long pipes disposed here and there, suggesting rent-dinners and club meetings, and perhaps the sitting of the court-leet. But it is not here among these tables and benches that it is proposed that I should sleep, but in a snug little chamber beyond, where a funereal four-post bedstead is awaiting me, with dark moreen hangings, and a feather-bed in which one sinks to unknown depths. The windows look out upon the village street, which is rather reassuring, for the thought is something appalling of being cut off from the rest of the living world by the space of that big, half-empty hall, which must look ghostly enough by night, with its suggestions of past times in its tarnished sconces—a room that may have shaken beneath the feet of dancers, and echoed to the strains of music long ago, while dancers and musicians are now sleeping quietly enough under the churchyard sod. At Christmas-time, indeed, in the long winter nights, when the echoes of old festivities might float about the place, it would be eerie enough to sleep alongside that big room; but now, when twilight passed without a break of darkness into dawn, the ghostly merry-makers would hardly put in an appearance.

And this question settled, I was anxious to have a look at the river. We had lost sight of the Thames at Oxford, and had seen no sign of it since; and here was a solid, dry-looking place, with none of the appearance of a riverside place.

"Which is the way to the river, my lad?" I ask of a white-headed boy who is sunning himself about the inn gateway.

"The river—which river?" repeats the lad in bewilderment.

"Is there more than one river about here, then?"

The lad reflectively says: "Nao, a' don't think so."

But the river is not far off, after all—a placid, unobtrusive little river, with deep sedgy banks. There is the high-arched bridge, on the steep crown of which is at this moment, as it seems, perilously perched a huge load of hay, rising high against the sky. There is no wider horizon than this, the high-crowned bridge, the load of hay, and some deserted-looking buildings on either hand; but presently, with much whip-cracking and gee-waoing, the load of hay is trundled out of the way, and from the top of the bridge we get a view of the wide breadth of river meadows and low-lying lands, with a range of hills in the hazy distance. The river ripples tranquilly below, with no sign of boat or sail on its surface.

Everywhere is heard the clanking of whetstones and scythes, and the swish of the scythe-blade among the grass. People are making hay while the sun shines, and in hot haste, for a storm may bring a flood, and a flood may carry off all the haycocks, and spread them, damaged and worthless, on other people's meadows.

It is pleasant to sit by the margin of the river on a wisp of dried sedge, and smoke a pipe while appreciating all this busy stir of the haymakers. Above stretches the wide arch of the handsome bridge, a world too wide, it seems, for the shrunken bed of the little river. But the relieving arches pierced in the massive haunches of the bridge tell another tale, a tale of heavy floods, and wild rushes of sullen muddy waters over the sunken meadows.

But all is bright enough now, the sun beating fiercely down upon the haymakers. Only the bridge looked cool, casting its deep shadow upon the waters, while through the archway you saw the old deserted wharves and the little riverside settlement, that had once been the head of the navigation in these parts, with,

once upon a time, its cluster of barges lying there, and a stir of loading and unloading, but all now silent and deserted, and the weedy bed of the river hardly ever disturbed by a passing keel.

Hot as it is, the heat is more endurable by the river-bank, where there are cool reflections, and sometimes refreshing splashes, where some wary old fish takes timely notice of an approaching intruder, and the dragon-flies flit sparkling here and there. And now over a pleasant reach of the river shows the quiet town, the tall church-spire, and buildings scattered about among the foliage. Here, too, enters a little stream—the Leach, no doubt—which gives its name to the town, and to many other settlements on its course, and that, topographical books say, falls into the Thames. But “falls” is not the word; say, rather, glides, without fuss or bother, into an imperceptible junction.

Strolling farther along the banks of the river, I come presently upon the lock—a modest little wooden lock, with a nice little cottage belonging to it, where hens are clucking and broods of young chickens and ducklings are basking in the sunshine. Below there is a fine collection of water-weeds growing in placid security in what should be the navigable channel. I am beginning to disbelieve in the boat that is said to be coming down from Charlwood Hall, having seen no sign of navigation as yet, except, by the way, an old punt that the haymakers have put in requisition to ferry their supplies across the river. But the healthy-looking young woman who comes out to feed the chickens assures me that boats do pass up and down at times. But this is the highest lock on the river, the young henwife reminds me, and there is more traffic, no doubt, lower down.

A little farther on the road is reached, which crosses the river by a wooden bridge; and here by good luck under the shadow of overhanging trees stands a pretty little inn, under the sign of The Trout. For the heat and the sight of all this haymaking work has caused a wondrous thirst. The open door leads into a homely room, with settles round about it, where two or three sunburnt labourers are sitting over their mugs of ale. The window looks upon a cool and pleasant backwater, where a punt and a boat or two are lying moored. The labourers soon move off, for time is worth money in haymaking, and they are replaced

by others, who bring their mid-day meal in a pocket-handkerchief and spread it upon the oaken table. But one of the guests remains all the time, and is an object of a good deal of interest to the rest, for he is deaf and dumb, it seems, and the labourers have many words to say in pity of his condition. Nor are they content with words only—a drink out of the mug of beer, a hunk of the bread-and-cheese, a slice of the homely meat-pie, are offered and accepted. One knowing youth is able to talk a little with his fingers, and his communications with the deaf-mute are looked upon with something like awe and wonder.

Then there are fishermen haunting the place, whose talk beguiles the sultry hours, and, when the worst of the heat is over, a shorter way back is discovered across the fields, a walk that leads past the schools, where a joyous rout of children are just issuing forth, and across the churchyard, where the sexton has just finished scooping out a deep and roomy grave. And arriving at the inn, with thoughts of the possibilities of dinner, I discover a groom and dogcart, with an old thoroughbred in the shafts, standing at the door, and am told that a gentleman is waiting to see me. It is Uncle Pyecroft, no doubt, who has lost no time, it seems, in honouring his nephew's introduction.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXVI. GERALD'S LETTER.

THUS everybody who knew of Theo's engagement knew also that it had come to a sudden end; and the last to know this was herself.

Lady Redcliff chose to stay on a few days at Locarno; she found the hotel cheap and comfortable. Theo liked this arrangement, for she was very fond of Locarno. It might not have the fairy beauty, the wide expanse of brilliant water, the shadowy distance, of Baveno and other places on the lakes, but it was wild, and interesting, and picturesque, and less evenly civilised than those pet haunts of the English.

Theo loved it, and thought it quite beautiful, but association was everything with her. During the next few days she found that she could not even bear Combe's company in her walks; it was necessary to be alone.

Lady Redcliff was very quiet, and did

not say much about this. Theo rambled along the sides of the vine-terraced hills, smiled and spoke to the women laden with their baskets, made friends with the goats, sketched, gathered wild-flowers. She spent a good deal of her time in the loggia of the convent, dreaming idly in the sunshine; sometimes she would stray into the gaudy little church, and sit there in the shade and coolness. A peasant woman might come in to say her prayers, a monk might move about for a few minutes in the sanctuary.

Theo's favourite corner was near a side altar, where there was a large modern picture of the Entombment of Our Lord. The faces were pale, the colour and feeling of the picture were solemn and quiet. It was a restful, comforting picture to look at, up there in the intense stillness of the church.

Theo did not know that she wanted comforting; her whole heart was full of the happy triumph of her love for Gerald, and yet there was a strange sadness at the root of things. Her grandmother was very cold to her; the first anger seemed to have changed into indifference. She felt keenly that she had no one but Gerald in the world; she wondered if he knew that as well as she did; she wondered how she could have let him go away so soon, when they had so many, many things to say to each other.

She went out of the church into the little gallery, where she and Gerald had stood that day, and leaned both her hands hard upon the warm stones of the parapet, and thought for a moment whether it had been wrong and selfish to call him back when he was going.

"No, I could not have done anything else," she said to herself, as she flushed and smiled at the remembrance.

The nightingales were singing, and the masses of pink flowers blooming sweetly in the sunshine. Theo thought she would go back and write to him; perhaps—yes, surely, she would find a letter waiting for her. He had written from London, but that was not in answer to hers; the letter was perfect in its way, however, and she took it out and read it once more as she crossed the lonely loggia, and went down the worn old steps. When she reached the foot of the ascent, where the Madonna is painted on the wall, something seemed to persuade her to stay out a little longer, and instead of going on to the hotel, she turned the other way into the square

where the large church stands; its bells were now ringing for a funeral, and a little crowd had gathered to see the procession pass. Slowly the long string of people came winding up the narrow street, a band playing a march, priests, banners, children of the choir; the coffin was that of a little child, and was followed by children dressed in white and flowers; then the long lines of lighted candles flickered in the daylight, and shone like red sparks as they passed on into the gloom of the church. Last of the procession came a dog, walking with his head and tail down.

Theo followed them to the church door, and stood looking in for a few minutes, while the service went on; but presently she shivered all over, and turned away and walked quickly back to the hotel.

When she reached her room she found Gerald's letter there upon the table. She read it several times through before she understood it in the least. Gerald said that he was miserable, that he found he had made a terrible mistake, that it was impossible they should ever marry, and that, therefore, she was free, and he could only ask her to forget him. He told her that he had had an appointment offered him in South Africa, and should go out there as soon as he could, not that it mattered the least what became of him, but it was not possible for him to stay in England.

"One can bear anything but disgrace," he said. "I knew it was selfish to tell you at all, but I thought I could work for you; and you will believe that I had not the remotest idea of the discovery that was in store for me. If you care to know more, will you ask Lady Redcliff? She can tell you."

"What does he mean?" said Theo, and she laid down her face on the letter.

The next moment she looked up, for Lady Redcliff came into the room, and she said to her, in a low, puzzled voice:

"What does he mean?"

"He has come to his senses. I'm glad of it," said Lady Redcliff. "He will get on much better without you. He has written me a very sensible letter."

She held it out, and Theo took it from her, but the words swam in a mist before her eyes.

"What does he mean?" she said again. "What does he mean about disgrace?"

"He understands that we don't want to be connected with swindlers, however

charming they may be," said Lady Redcliff. "Give me my letter, I'll read it to you; and don't stare like a madwoman.

"DEAR LADY REDCLIFF,—You were right in thinking that I was perfectly ignorant of what you tell me. I shall, of course, do as you wish, and you and yours will never be troubled with me again.—Yours faithfully, GERALD FANE."

"I call that very much to the purpose," she went on. "The Fanes have plenty of pride. I knew I might safely reckon on that, at least."

Theo's senses were coming back to her now.

"Do you mean that this is your doing?" she said very quietly.

"Whose doing should it be?" said Lady Redcliff. "If any one has a right to interfere, to stop you from jumping over a precipice, I suppose I am the person. You wouldn't listen to me, so I was obliged to write to Mr. Fane."

"And you told him——"

"I told him that nice story you told me, about his brother and your uncle. He has more sense of honour, you see, than you have. You thought nothing of it; he is not so unnatural."

"And did you tell him that I know it—that you heard it from me?" said Theo.

"No, I did not."

"Oh, grandmamma, I shall never trust you again. What have you done?—what could that matter?—what have you done?" said Theo, and she hid her face on Gerald's letter again.

Her grandmother sat down and looked at her with an expression of mocking amusement; but there was something serious underneath. The girl looked as if her spirit was broken; she had laid her beautiful head down, as if in despair. It seemed as if Lady Redcliff's letter to Gerald had indeed brought her an easy triumph. But Lady Redcliff knew Theo too well to feel sure of that.

"What have I done? That is a funny question. I have done the best I could for you, child," she said; "saved you from your own insanity."

"Do you think so?" said Theo, suddenly lifting her head. Her eyes were brilliant; there were no tears in them, no softness, but the flame that her grandmother used to like was burning there. "Do you really think you have saved me?"

she said. "Do you think I am going to give him up so easily?"

"He has given you up easily enough," said Lady Redcliff coolly. "A most manageable young man. I believe he is rather glad to be free."

"Read that, then," said Theo, flushing crimson, and giving her Gerald's letter.

Lady Redcliff put on her spectacles, turned to the window, and read the letter carefully through. Her manner was very calm and deliberate, but she could not control her hands, which shook so that the paper rustled, and she had to lay it down on the arm of her chair.

"I don't see much feeling in that; he says no more than he is obliged to say," she remarked, quietly handing the letter back to Theo. "You are beyond him; he doesn't understand your ways; he would get on better with some second-rate flirt—some shopkeeper's daughter. Going out to Africa! What excellent news! Let him go, and marry some rich blackamoor. Don't think about him any more, Theo."

"You are talking nonsense, and contradicting yourself; you don't mean what you are saying," said Theo, looking at her. "You said just now that he was proud, like all the Fanes. So he is; prouder than anyone I know. You have not the faintest idea of his character."

"Who is contradicting herself now?" said Lady Redcliff, with a short laugh. "Pride is a very fine excuse. A man might love you better than his pride."

"He does," said Theo, with sudden passion.

"Does he?" said Lady Redcliff.

"He has done what you made him do, and now you are not satisfied!"

"Oh yes, I am," said Lady Redcliff; "but I don't like him any better for it, nor do you. What authority had I over him? I simply said that I would not consent, expressed my surprise at his having asked you, told him that story, and advised him to put an end to the thing. He has certainly behaved like a very good boy, and will meet with his reward some day, no doubt."

"Perhaps you thought you were doing right," said Theo dreamily, laying her head down on her hands again. "I shall go mad, or my heart is broken, or something. Africa! I wish I could die."

"Oh, nonsense! don't pretend to be a worse fool than you are," said Lady Redcliff angrily, watching her with cat-like sharp-

ness. "Are you the first girl who has been prevented from marrying a beggar? and do girls like that generally die? No, my dear, they live to marry rich men. A couple of years hence you will be ashamed of yourself."

"I am ashamed of myself now," said Theo. "I am going to write to Mr. Fane, and tell him that I knew it all along, and it is nothing—nothing to me. Will you go away now, please. I must write at once, or I shall not have time."

Lady Redcliff got up and walked across the room. When she came near the door she stopped, and said very gravely:

"The man has done quite right, Theo. He could only set you free. I tell you, under the circumstances, there was nothing else he could do. I knew he was ignorant, and I knew you were a fool. I took the only means I had to put an end to a great piece of madness. To tell you the truth, I think Gerald Fane has behaved well, and I respect him for it. But I shall not respect you if you degrade yourself by trying to bring the thing on again."

Theo gave her grandmother a quick glance, and looked away again, that brown flame shining in her eyes. She shook her head impatiently.

"You need not be afraid," she said. "But I must tell him what I think about it," and she took some paper and began to write in a great hurry.

Later in the day, Lady Redcliff was pacing about in the hall, an amusement she was fond of, rather to the distress of other people in the hotel, who shrank from her instinctively. She saw Combe coming downstairs with a letter in her hand, and going towards the letter-box. She walked slowly forward and intercepted her.

"Give me that letter, Combe," she said.

Combe hesitated a moment, but though she was a sturdy woman, she did not dare to disobey Lady Redcliff.

"Ah," said her ladyship, looking at the address, "I thought so. Now, Combe, I am going to take you into my confidence. I dare say you had plenty of love-affairs when you were young."

Combe grinned faintly, and stared in a sort of consternation. A sensible, strong-minded woman by nature, Lady Redcliff's black eyes, sharp tongue, and hard resolute manner had the effect of making her feel herself a helpless idiot. She used sometimes to laugh at Sparrow's tremblings,

but in Sparrow's place she would have been almost as bad.

"No doubt you managed your affairs better than your mistress does hers," said Lady Redcliff. "She has got herself into a horrid scrape. You know whom I mean; you see the address on this letter?"

Combe stammered and turned red; she couldn't say, she was sure—

"Well, this gentleman's relations are dishonest people; he is going to Africa; and there is no madness that Miss Theodosia is not capable of. I've no doubt that in this letter she is proposing to go with him. She would die of fever, or be eaten by savages. Being her grandmother, it is my duty to prevent it, therefore, you see, Combe—" and she tore the letter into three or four pieces. "I have not read it, I have simply destroyed it. And now, if you are a trustworthy person, you will not tell her what I have done. Because, if you do, she will immediately write to him again. Do you see?"

Combe looked horribly puzzled and distressed.

"Yes, my lady," she said, "but I don't know, I'm sure; Miss Theo gave me the letter to post."

"Don't be a fool!" said Lady Redcliff coolly. "If she asks you about it, you must tell a lie, just for once in your life—of course you never did such a thing before—but she is a baby, and babies must be deceived for their good. If it ever comes out, you may put all the blame upon me."

Then Lady Redcliff laughed, and walked away to the reading-room, with the scraps of Theo's poor letter crumpled up in her hand.

She made her way past two or three chilly people who were sitting by the fire, and dropped those bits of paper between the burning logs. She stood for a moment watching them as they flamed, with a mischievous smile on her withered face. A man who was sitting there said afterwards to his wife that she was just like a little old evil spirit.

After Theo had written that letter to Gerald she became outwardly much calmer. The thing was out of her own hands now. She had told him that his brother's past doings could never make any difference to her; had asked him whether it was really necessary for him to go to Africa; had, altogether, written him a letter like herself, frank, and generous, and gentle, which would have made him happy if he had received it. She had nothing to do now but wait for his answer.

For the next few days she occupied herself as she had done before, in wandering about the hills. Sometimes she made excursions to distant valleys, wild and lonely, where streams of brilliant blue-green water came foaming down from the heart of the mountains. On these longer expeditions she took Combe with her, but Combe appeared to be tired of Locarno, and sick of scenery; her looks and manners were so dismal that Theo would certainly have asked what was the matter, if she had not herself been lost in a land of dreams. Lady Redcliff was kind—kinder than she had been before Gerald's letter came; she even asked Theo what she thought about going on to Baveno, and consented without grumbling when the girl said she would rather stay where she was. As the days passed on, she began to be anxious and uneasy, for no letter came from Gerald. She said nothing, and did not write to him again; but she spent more and more time at her convent of the Sasso, lingering so long each day in the church, with her head bowed on her hands, that the old monk who crept in and out thought she was a devout Catholic in trouble, and one day spoke to her. She looked up at him, smiling sadly, and shaking her head. He understood, smiled too, and left her with a muttered apology. They exchanged friendly greetings several times afterwards.

Theo had another friend on the hills, a good Swiss woman, who had cows and a vineyard of her own. She and Gerald had wandered so far that morning in the only walk they took together. They had strolled on between the vineyards, along the narrow terraced paths, green, and sprinkled with wild flowers, in the dew and shadows of morning. They had found their way into her bright, budding vineyard, just as the sun was beginning to shine hotly over the hills, and she had met them with courteous smiles, and had asked them into her house to rest, and had given them bowls of new milk in a high little room with red leather furniture, and a balcony looking down over the lake, whose veil of mist was just rolling away. It was impossible to forget that exquisite morning, the feeling of wild freedom, of a happiness beyond earth, mixed with the strange new shyness which made the kind woman's mouth curl with smiles as she brought them in the milk and asked them little questions. Then the small, laughing argument they had about paying her, and her refusal to take even a

franc, and her politeness in escorting them to the end of the vineyard, and pointing out the shortest way back to Locarno, before they shook hands with her and parted!

"You will come and see me again?" said she.

"I shall be very glad," said Theo; "but——"

"I am going back to England this very day, madame," said Gerald in a melancholy tone.

"Ah, quel malheur!" cried the friendly woman, clasping her hands together.

Theo had been to see her once or twice since then, and on her last afternoon at Locarno—but she did not know it was that—she went once more. The good Swiss was full of sympathy, and much too well-bred to show her curiosity, but she wondered why the pretty Englishwoman was so very, very sad.

When Theo said good-bye to her at the entrance of the vineyard, she put her head a little on one side, and asked, with an irresistible smile in her dark eyes:

"And how is monsieur?"

Theo was not at all angry, but looked at her with a feeling of sudden tears.

"I don't know," she said in a low voice. "I have not had a letter for some days."

"Ah, is it possible?" murmured her friend; and she took Theo's hand and stroked it gently. "Ah, these men!" she sighed.

"It is no fault of his," said Theo quickly.

"Very well; then it does not matter. If all is right between you, all will be well some day."

Theo felt that her cheeks were burning as she walked away along the narrow green path back towards the Madonna del Sasso, where she was going to spend half an hour on her way home; but there was something very sweet in the friendliness of this gentle foreigner.

The half-hour lengthened itself into an hour, for the church and the old loggia had never been so still, so peaceful, so comforting as they were that afternoon; the leaves and flowers were brighter, the distant colours more lovely, the song of the birds more strangely thrilling. Theo felt as if she could hardly bear to go away.

"It is like leaving peace behind," she said to herself as she left it at last. And

then the thought, "There may be a letter," quickened her steps down the stony way.

There was a letter, but not from him. It was dated from a street in Kensington :

"MY DEAR MISS MEYNELL,—You said I might write to you when I was in trouble, and I am in very great trouble now, and it is all about you. At least, it is about Gerald, too, for he sailed this morning for Cape Town, and I know he expected a letter from you before he went, and did not get one, so he went away very unhappy. It has all been so dreadfully sudden, and I can't bear these changes. On our journey home he told me something about you that I could not believe for joy, and now he says it is never to be, but he would not explain anything. One of these men wanted him to take his place and go out at once, and he said it was best for him to go. Next week I am to go back to Mrs. Keene's, the school where I was before, and to live there for the present. Gerald settled all that before he sailed. I am sure you would have written if you had known how miserable he was. Everything seems too lonely and dreadful; it is almost worse than being abroad, but I hope I have not done wrong in telling you all this. Please write to me if I have not offended you. —With my love, your ever affectionate

"ADA FANE."

After she had read this letter, Theo sat quite still for a few minutes, gazing out of the window. Then she turned to Combe, who happened to be there, and said in a low, tired voice :

"Combe, do you remember posting a letter for me a few days ago—I forget which day—a letter addressed to Mr. Fane? Yes, I know you posted it; I sent you downstairs with it. It must have gone wrong at the other end."

"Well, Miss Theo," began Combe, and then she coughed and hesitated.

"I know you did," said Theo. "It doesn't matter. Do you know that I am engaged to him?"

Combe choked again.

"Of course you suspected it," said Theo calmly. "It is a pity about this letter. He has sailed for Africa, and I wrote it on purpose to stop him."

Her quietness, a kind of pale despair, was so much more touching than any anger or excitement, that Combe was seized with an agony of repentance. She bounced

across the room, flung herself on her knees by Theo, and with sobs and tears told her all the truth.

"Poor old Combe!" said Theo, when she understood, and she gave her hand to the old nurse, who kissed it and wetted it with tears. "Don't mind so much. It was grandmamma's doing, not yours; you couldn't very easily disobey her. Now stop crying, and begin to pack as fast as you can; you and I will start by the first train to-morrow morning."

"Indeed, I'm glad and thankful to hear it," sobbed Combe.

Theo left her to recover herself, and went to her grandmother's room. Lady Redcliff, who was reading in the window, looked up carelessly, but Theo's face immediately fixed her attention.

"Good gracious! who's dead now?" she exclaimed.

"I came to say good-bye to you," said Theo, standing near the door. "I am not coming down to dinner, and Combe and I will start for England by the first train to-morrow."

"What new freak is this, pray?"

"I find that I shall never have an answer to my letter—my letter, that I wrote to Mr. Fane the other day," said Theo. "And so it is good-bye for ever, grandmamma!"

"Dear me, what a tragedy queen!" said Lady Redcliff. "Good-bye for ever! Certainly, and with the greatest relief on my part. Since you came to live with me, I have not known a moment's peace. Your friendships and your love-affairs—well, I suppose I shall see your marriage in the Times next week, so pray don't trouble yourself to write and announce it."

Theo stood still for a moment, looking at her.

"Go, please. You are an ungrateful, unnatural girl, and I hope I shall never see you again," said the old woman. "Do you hear?—go."

And so, without another word, Theo left her.

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GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXVII. DECIDED.

GERALD had not told his sister the real reason of his sudden flight, and of the vanishing of all his hopes. Theo, of course, did not tell her. Ada thought that all this misery was simply caused by Lady Redcliff's disapproval; she could imagine that that would be very powerful; and when Theo appeared one day at her lodgings, and made arrangements for taking up her abode there, with Combe and all her worldly goods, saying quietly that she was not going to live with her grandmother any longer, Ada found herself in a state of awful, mystified happiness. Theo told her that her letter to Gerald had been lost—she did not say how; that there had been a little misunderstanding, which made him think it right to give up the engagement.

"But I don't agree with him; I think that is impossible," said Theo calmly. Then she stooped over Ada, and laid her cheek against her curly head, and said in the same quiet voice: "You mustn't go back to Mrs. Keene—at least, not now. You must live with me, because I am quite alone."

Ada was sitting on a footstool beside her. She put her arms round Theo's neck, and pulled down her head to her shoulder, and kissed her, and whispered tenderly:

"Dear Theo, I do love you!"

Theo's eyes were wet, and she drew a long, sobbing breath as she returned the child's embrace.

But she did not again let Ada see so far into her unhappiness. She became very wise, and thoughtful, and practical, taking Ada entirely under her care, as if she had

really been her sister. She went to Mrs. Keene, to explain this different arrangement for Ada. She considered her expenses, and attempted one or two house-keeping talks with Combe, which generally ended in such displays of ignorance that Combe grimly smiled, and advised her mistress to leave all that to her. Another thought, which crossed Theo's mind very often with a sharp pang of pain, was this: that she ought to sell Aster. It was most unlikely, under present circumstances, that she would ever be able to ride him again. Theo knew very well that by this engagement she was separating herself from all her past life. It was gone; she was another woman; she did not belong any longer to the Norths, but to Gerald Fane. His sister was hers, his future was hers; and though she was happy, and would not for all the world have had things otherwise, there was certainly a touch of bitterness in the remembrance of the past. Theo was neither heartless, nor selfish, nor ungrateful in her love.

It was a strange thought—when she was established in her new home with Ada, in a terrace turning off from one of those quiet roads which lead into Kensington High Street, in small, high, bow-windowed rooms, looking across into a mass of fresh young trees and lilac-bushes, where the birds sang—it was very strange to think that none of her relations knew where she was, and she did not quite care to tell them.

She had had a note from John Goodall, one day at Locarno, after Gerald's despairing letter had come to spoil all the new happiness. John had written rather shortly and stiffly, telling her that Helen was not strong enough to be agitated by her news; he had therefore put her letter aside for the present.

"Now that things are changed," wrote John, "I suppose there will be no necessity to communicate that news at all, at least, till she is quite herself again. I am sorry if you have been troubled about the business, but I must confess that I should have found it difficult to offer very hearty congratulations."

"How horrid it is when one's friends are married!" said Theo to herself, and she tore John's letter and threw it away. "I didn't want his congratulations; I wanted Nell's."

As the days of her London life went on, she began to wish very much for some little communication with Nell. She did not choose to write to her again, to have her letter put aside by John, so she wrote to him on the subject of selling Aster. It crossed her mind that perhaps he would like to buy the dear horse himself. If she had dared, she would have written to Hugh on the subject; but that was beyond even her coolness and resolution.

Her letter to John Goodall was quite short and business-like. She did not explain how she came to be in Kensington, or say a word about her own past, present, or future doings. She only asked his advice about the horse, and begged him to tell her when she might write to Nell, and hope for an answer.

The next evening she was sitting alone in the drawing-room window, dreaming. There was a lull in the distant noises, and birds were singing loudly in the garden opposite, while a sweet scent of May breathed in at the open window. Theo was, in fancy, not there at all; she was at sea with Gerald, far away, when she was brought back to reality by a familiar step and voice, and woke up to find John Goodall standing in the room.

At the first moment she was very glad to see him; this worthy fellow, whose marriage with her cousin had made her angry and scornful, was now like a face and voice from happy old times, from the days when she had belongings of her own.

"How good of you!" she said, flushing with pleasure, as John grasped her hand.

It was a very different reception from the one at Lady Redcliff's last autumn, when her cold stateliness had at first chilled his kind intentions. John was quite at his ease now. He sat down and looked at her, his face full of curiosity.

"I was so surprised," he said, "when I got your letter this morning—thinking you were still in Switzerland, you know—that

I was obliged to tell Helen the whole story. She is much stronger now, so it didn't matter. And, if one may ask, what have you done with Lady Redcliff? And what are you doing all by yourself here?"

"I left my grandmother at Locarno," said Theo rather sadly.

John did not wait for an answer to his other question.

"You asked me about selling Aster," he went on. "That is a matter for consideration. Helen can't imagine why you should want to do it; but, of course, you have your reasons."

"I have," said Theo. Then she felt an earnest wish not to talk of her own concerns, and began asking questions about Helen and the baby. She longed to know whether John had seen Gerald when he was at Deerpark, or how he had made up his mind that the affair had come to nothing. She wanted him to know that he was mistaken, but it did not seem possible to tell him. As he talked about his wife and son, she gazed dreamily out of the window, hardly paying much attention to what he said, till she was obliged to answer a question.

"Have you any particular reason for staying here?"

"Yes," said Theo gravely.

"Really?" said John. "Helen wants you to come down to us. She is very anxious to have you. In fact, she is afraid you have thought her unfeeling; but I explained to her that it was all my doing, and that you knew that very well. I could not have startled and distressed her, you know. You will come?"

Theo shook her head. She saw that she must tell him all about it, but that was dreadfully difficult. She remembered his letter, his remark that they could not have congratulated her. He must know as soon as possible that her engagement was not over, as he thought—that he and Helen must accept that kindly, or let her alone for the future.

"There is no sense or object in your staying here alone," said John. "If you are to rejoin Lady Redcliff when she comes back, you had much better spend the intervening time with us. I know it may be painful—but you must have courage, and remember that you will be giving great pleasure to Helen. After all, she is the nearest friend you have. There will be nothing actually to annoy you. Come down with me to-morrow."

As John talked thus, kindly and benevo-

lently, he began to fear very much what he and Helen had feared, and yet declared impossible—that Theo in her obstinacy might imagine herself bound to Gerald Fane still. For every reason, Helen was wild with distress and dismay at the idea of such a marriage for Theo. She would not trust herself to write, for she wished to take it for granted that Gerald Fane's words were final, and that such a mad dream was given up for ever. But she insisted on John's going to London that very day, to see Theo and find out the truth, and bring her back with him. John now found himself in a great difficulty, for he suspected that the cause of parting with Lady Redcliff had been a quarrel on that subject, and he could not imagine what this foolish girl was going to do next. Fane was gone; he knew that for certain, and that at least was reassuring. But, as the moments went by and Theo did not answer him, but sat there in dreamy sadness with her head turned away, he became more and more uneasy.

"You seem rather short of friends," he said bluntly at last. "You may as well tell me the real state of the case."

"I should like to," said Theo. Then, after a pause, she went on: "I am not alone here, John. I have Ada Fane with me."

He muttered some exclamation. Theo went on with an effort, which was only shown by her suddenly deepening colour.

"Mr. Fane has gone to Africa, you know. I shall stay here with her, at any rate till I hear from him."

There was a pause.

"This is very bad news," said John solemnly.

"Tell me, what made you think that there was any change?" said Theo. "Who told you—why did you believe that I was inconstant?"

It was not, after all, so very difficult to talk to John, who, with all his sturdiness, had something of an old woman about him.

"It did not cross my mind to use the word 'inconstant' about either of you," said John. "I thought Fane was quite right, and was doing a wise thing, and an honourable thing, when he told me it was all over. If he had known the circumstances sooner, he would never have—have thought of it. I quite believed him. I always thought he was a good fellow."

"Thank you," Theo murmured with a

faint smile. "Where did you see him? Please tell me all about it."

She sat looking sad and indifferent while John gravely told her the whole story. He spoke very strongly of his own horror, and Helen's, and Hugh's, at the idea of her being connected with the man who had treated her uncle so villainously.

"Of course, we all feel," said John, "that, if you had known about that, you would never have imagined such a thing possible. The discovery must have been a shock to you, as it evidently was to him, poor chap! But now I don't see how you can help taking the same view that he does. It is wonderful to me that you should have quarrelled with your grandmother, which you evidently have, and rushed back to England to set up house with his sister. I can't conceive what you mean by it."

John now spoke with some little irritation, for he was becoming angry with Theo. She seemed to him a perfectly undignified and wrong-headed person.

"You will all think very badly of me," she said. "As for Hugh—he might have told you something more, something to lower me quite into the depths. You won't think me a proper companion for Helen, when I tell you this—I knew it all along. Hugh told me, last summer, the story of Uncle Henry's losses, and when he came to Woodcote in the autumn—that day you fetched me from Deerhurst, do you remember?—he told me that Mr. Litton was the man. I minded it very much at first, but then, later, I knew that it did not matter to me."

She ended very low, and with a slight tremor in her voice, while she still sat looking out of the window. John cleared his throat once or twice; he was very much surprised and rather shocked at what she had just told him, and he did not quite know what to say in answer. She went on again in a minute:

"He wrote to me at Locarno to break it off, and told me—and about the African plan too—and I wrote to him at once to tell him that I had known it all along. Poor grandmamma was very angry, and she prevented my letter from going to the post, but I did not know that for some days, and I was waiting for an answer from him. And then I had a letter from Ada, telling me that he was gone. So I came here at once, and I have written to him again from here."

"And what in the world is going to

happen to you, then?" said John after a long pause.

"I don't know," said Theo; and then she added calmly: "There is Africa. If he can't come home, and if he wishes it, I may go out to him there."

"Excuse me, Theo, but I think you have completely lost your senses," said John very crossly. "Besides, it's shocking——"

Here he was interrupted by the entrance of Ada, who came in quite innocently, not knowing that anyone was there. John immediately got up, and very stiffly and gravely wished them good-bye. Ada coloured, and opened her blue eyes wide, perceiving that she had come in at the wrong moment. Theo followed John to the top of the stairs.

"Give my love to Nell," she said, and she did not seem to resent his last words at all.

He turned round, and took her hand again in both his, holding it very tight.

"Look here, Theo, this is the long and short of it," he said: "you will have to choose between your relations and him."

Theo's eyes fell for a moment; then she lifted her head and looked him straight in the face.

"I know. I am very sorry," she said. "Good-bye! but give my love to Nell, all the same."

After this, for some time, Theo had very little more communication with her relations. John Goodall wrote to say that he would like to buy Aster, and from the tone of his letter, Theo fancied he was not buying the horse for himself, and suspected that he was only Hugh's agent in the matter; but she did not know this positively till afterwards.

Nell, in her grief and disappointment, wrote a very indignant letter, saying a great deal about Uncle Henry, and the past, and Theo's forgetfulness of it; a letter which hurt Theo so much, coming from Nell, that she did not answer it for a long time. Of Hugh and of her grandmother she neither saw nor heard anything.

She and Ada led the quietest of lives together. Sometimes she, at least, felt a little desolate, for this child of course could not quite understand her, and the life would have been a dull one for Ada if she had not loved Theo so much that the fact of being with her was happiness. They had no amusements; they had peace, and talked for hours about Gerald, so that

Theo soon knew as much about his life as Ada herself did. They went out for long walks with Wool, who now lived in a kennel of his own in their kind landlady's back-yard.

Ada wrote to Gerald by every mail, but Theo would not write to him again; she had nothing to say till he answered her first letter. Two or three short notes came from him, from Madeira, from St. Helena, from Cape Town. He was going up the country to Kimberley as fast as possible.

Through those long, bright, dusty months of May and June the only person who came to see them was Clarence Litton.

Before Gerald left he had made up with Ada, having explained to her that his evil designs had been all for her advantage; and since then, though she had told him that Theo was with her, he had written to ask if he might call sometimes. He was a good deal in London now, for Deerpark was sold to Mr. Goodall, and Warren had returned from abroad and gone to South America in search of new investments.

Clarence thought it likely that he might follow him out there in the autumn. In the meanwhile he was on his good behaviour, and came rather often to see Ada. Though she was no longer dependent on him, something seemed to have renewed in his mind the kindness of years ago, and perhaps he was grateful to Gerald for keeping their young sister ignorant of his past disgrace.

He did not often see Theo, who could not help avoiding him, but when they met, they treated each other with grave politeness, and Clarence gradually began to think that he admired Theo more than anyone in the world. He knew, if Ada did not, what it must have cost her to hold to Gerald in spite of everyone; and with all his hardness, he was troubled by the doubt whether Gerald quite deserved such unselfish devotion.

Time went thus creeping on until about the third week in July. Then at last, after the long weary suspense, so long and so weary that despairing thoughts began to haunt Theo sometimes, her grandmother's cutting words about Gerald rising up like spectres to frighten her—one day his answer came. She spent about half an hour alone with it, for it decided her fate in life. Then she took it to the drawing-room, where she had left Ada, saying in a quiet voice as she walked into the room:

"I have got my letter, dear, and I am going out to him at once."

Then she saw that Clarence was there too, and flushed a little, but nobody's presence could affect her much. He looked up at her, startled, not more by her words than by the sudden brilliance of her beauty as she stood there. The worn, dreamy look of suspense was gone, burnt away, as it seemed, by a flame of happy enthusiasm.

"Oh, Theo, not really!" cried Ada with tears, as she went and put her arms round her friend.

"Do you think you are doing a wise thing?" said Clarence gravely after a moment.

"I don't know!" she said, meeting his eyes for the first time with a perfectly frank, sweet smile; and her look and tone, foolish Theo! added very distinctly, "I don't care!"

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

OUR RETURNED PRODIGAL.

THERE are divers ways of spoiling a boy in his bringing up. A good deal may be done by over-coddling; indeed, when one hears of a spoilt child, the mind is prone to fix upon the coddling process at once as the fount and origin of the mischief; but there is another side of the picture. Very efficient work may be done by neglect or indolence on the part of the parent, who, of course, never suspects or admits that he is either careless or indolent. He generally calls his process "hardening," or, "teaching the boy to rough it." It is most necessary, no doubt, in this competitive age, that boys should be taught to be self-reliant, and to make their own way in the world; but their training will be very imperfect—most likely, indeed, it will turn out an utter failure, if with this hardening process they are allowed to grow up with a minimum of direction or restraint. Those who have read the story of Walter Tafnell may remember the causes which led to his life's failure, and they will now be able to see, from the history of Mark Bidwell, that results little less disastrous can be reached by treatment diametrically opposite. Both boys were cursed with silly, selfish parents, but the selfishness of these took different forms. Mrs. Tafnell found she was happier when her boy was by her side, so she kept him there till all chance of his doing anything for himself was past and gone. Mr. Bidwell,

on the other hand, never seemed to care what his children might be doing so long as he himself was undisturbed by them. He was a flabby, fat, colourless man, with a wheezing voice and short breath; whose one occupation seemed to lie in pottering about his garden with a spud, and wearing out an apparently inexhaustible stock of old black dress-suits. How he could have accumulated so many was always a mystery to me. He had passed the best years of his life as a managing clerk in Lumley's Bank at Martlebury, and managing clerks in old-fashioned, steady-going banks, are rather given to the wear of garments of sober hue. Perhaps these were the cast-off of many years' service—too shabby for the metropolitan world of Martlebury, but good enough for the semi-rural life of our town. With his pension, and a hundred or so a year of his own, he managed to live comfortably in retirement. He had married late in life, and was now a widower with two children—a married daughter, and Mark, many years younger and the subject of the present paper.

The internal economy of the Bidwell household was of that character which makes one marvel how the delights and comforts of an English home can ever have grown into a tradition. Were such homes as that in which Mark Bidwell spent his youth very abundant, this tradition would have been strangled at its birth. We may therefore assume that they are exceptions, otherwise the tradition above-named would not have attained its present validity. The ruling spirit in the house was a terrible female known throughout Shillingbury as old Martha. She had been the cook of the establishment when Mrs. Bidwell died, and since that time had taken into her own hands the entire administration of the house, doing very little work herself, but seeing that it was done, somehow, by an ill-starred general servant, and a knife, boot, and shoe cleaning, and coal and water carrying boy. The general servant sometimes stayed for a year; but no boy was ever known to submit to old Martha's tyranny for more than three months.

The house was a roomy one, and might have been made very comfortable. There was a dining-room and a drawing-room, the first furnished on the most unpromising Spanish mahogany horsehair-seated lines, with a heavy flock paper on the walls, and a Brussels carpet of no pattern in particular on the floor. What the adornment of the drawing-room was, I

cannot say, for the very good reason that I never saw the inside of it, and I never met any one who had. These two apartments were purely honorary members of the establishment. The master of the house, ate, drank, smoked, read the paper, and took his daily nap in a little room to the rear, known as "the study." In this apartment a range of bookshelves covered one wall; but these had been woefully perverted from their natural purpose. A few dusty old calf-bound volumes, and a lot of ragged magazines and newspapers, filled a small space; but all the rest was occupied by the unlovely débris which an untidy man so surely gathers to himself wherever he may be. There were old boots, in all stages of dissolution, put aside to be mended, but left there, according to Mr. Bidwell's habit, "till another day." A large and heterogeneous collection of garden-seeds, and all the minor paraphernalia of an amateur gardener; old gloves, knives, saws; and tin-boxes occupied a good part of the lower shelves. The furniture was old and rickety. There were dirty, chintz-covered chairs, in which Mr. Bidwell sat mornings and evenings, and a sofa of like style, on which he reclined in the afternoon. The one window looked out upon a strip of kitchen-garden, which I never yet saw free from old potato-stalks, and here Mr. Bidwell spent what time was not devoted to sitting or reclining, in superintending the trenching of the ground, or in putting in with his own hands his peas and beans, or mustard and cress.

Mark was just nine years old when his mother died, and he naturally fell at once under the immediate dominion of old Martha, his father being quite satisfied with her treatment so long as the boy was kept out of his sight, except during meals. Thus Mark's notion of home was made up of life in the kitchen and passages, tempered by occasional visits to the study, where he would always be commanded to "get a book and keep quiet," of lonely wanderings about the ill-kept, fruitless garden, and of enforced seclusion in his bedroom, as a punishment for having disturbed his father's afternoon nap. When he was eleven he was sent off to a private school in a village about a dozen miles off—one of those classical and commercial establishments which managed to survive down to the middle of the century, though coming within measurable distance of the standard of Dotheboys Hall. It was inexpensive; the quarters were long and the holidays

short; the food, at any rate, was sufficient to keep the boys in average health; and, as to the teaching—well, Mr. Bidwell supposed that the boy would at least learn to read, and write, and cypher, and he did not trouble his head further in the matter. The half-year's bills, though they were rather a pull upon his income, did not seem to him money ill-spent, seeing that they represented ten months in the year without a boy in the house.

When Mark came home for the holidays, he found that his life at school, sordid as it was, at least gave him companionship, while at home there was nothing but solitude or worse. Then, of course, the young gentleman had become learned in all the unlicensed learning of the classical and commercial academy; the learning, that is, which is not taught in class, but is better remembered by far than any of the regular lessons. Who does not know how strong is the desire in the neophyte to discuss or to impart learning of this sort? I doubt whether young gentlemen from Eton or Winchester entirely limit their discourse to elegiacs or quadratic equations, or to the prospects of cricket or football for the following season, when they meet during the vacation; and the schoolboy is the same in this matter whether his education cost hundreds or tens of pounds per annum. Mark, not finding any companionship in the house, naturally began to look for it in the streets; and here again he was allowed to please himself so long as he left his associates outside the front door. He was not very particular as to the character and conduct of his playfellows. At one time he became very intimate with a certain Charley Harbrow, a young gentleman who once spent a month in Martlebury Gaol for larceny while Mark was away at school. He was out again by the time Mark came back for his summer-holidays, and the two were as thick as ever. Then Dr. Goldingham ventured one day to give Mr. Bidwell a hint that his boy was not spending his time in the most wholesome society, and the good doctor suffered the usual fate of those who offer sound advice unasked. Mr. Bidwell informed him that he knew quite well the way to bring up children—boys especially. His system was to harden them, and let them shift for themselves. He had been turned out into the world when he was twelve, and he couldn't see why what had been good for him should be bad for Mark. As it was he was spending double on Mark's

schooling compared with what his own had cost; and besides this, the boy would remain at school till he was thirteen. Then he must pack his traps, and set out in search of fortune.

Mark went on in this fashion till the end of his school-life. He drew closer his intimacy with Charley Harbrow and others of a like kidney, and, it is to be feared, joined them occasionally in their nocturnal expeditions—expeditions not always of a legitimate character. Indeed, it was once noised abroad in the town that he would have been brought up before the bench with the others on a charge of robbing Lawyer Merriew's grape-houses, if Dr. Goldingham had not actively intervened. The doctor despised old Bidwell as a selfish sluggard. He disliked the boy, too, and always prophesied that he would come to the gallows; but he had attended the mother in her dying illness, and had listened to the poor woman's fears as to the future of her boy, and the recollection of the anxious eyes and the tearful voice of the dying woman was quite enough to make him bestir himself in the present instance, though, no doubt, he would only have been helping justice had he let Master Mark stand in the dock alongside his fellow-depredators.

Mark was kept at school for more than a year beyond the time appointed by his father because the latter for a long time shirked the task of finding an opening for the lad. He had, or he considered that he had, a sort of a claim upon the Lumleys, and at last he roused himself sufficiently to go over to Martlebury, and lay these claims before the head of the firm. The upshot of it was that Mark was taken in as a sort of clerk-messenger at a salary of fifteen shillings a week. Lodgings were engaged for him, and for these his father made himself responsible; but Mark was informed that he would have to find everything else out of his salary. He had been duly "hardened" by the most approved method, and now he was to shift for himself.

It would have needed no very special gift of prophecy to have foretold the outcome of Mark's start in life. "Pitch a boy overboard and he'll keep afloat, never fear," is a saw in the mouth of many a careless, responsibility-shirking parent. All very well if the boy has been taught to swim, but the greater part of these parents are as careless as Mr. Bidwell was in the matter of moral natation. Anyhow, Mark

had not been taught the right kind of stroke wherewith to keep his head above water in the rapids and cross-currents of Martlebury life; and, besides this, his knowledge of the world, picked up in the society of Charley Harbrow, was to him like a heavy millstone about his neck. In the cathedral city of Martlebury he had no difficulty in finding Charley Harbrow's equivalent, a trifle accentuated, perhaps, but none the less noxious on that account. One of the chief features of Mr. Bidwell's system of letting a boy shift for himself was to turn him loose in a town without a friend to speak to or a decent house to enter. Mark soon realised the situation, and proceeded to provide himself with associates of the sort most suited to his taste, and to amuse himself generally, not altogether as he would perhaps, but as he could.

The end was not long in coming. To Mark's ears, already accustomed to the moral code of Charley Harbrow, the sound of the clinking gold and silver and of the rustling bank-notes was as pleasant as was the outward seeming of the fruit of that forbidden tree to our first mother. As he sat at his back-desk and watched Mr. Meddon, the chief cashier, counting and separating the notes with his fat fingers, and shovelling the gold about by hundreds of pounds at a time, he would think less of the accuracy of the column of figures upon which he was engaged, than upon the possibility of putting his fingers upon some of Mr. Meddon's notes and gold. The chance came soon. One day, when Mark carried some heavy ledgers to Mr. Meddon's desk for inspection, the cash drawer stood open, and the thing was done. Three or four sovereigns stuck in his fingers as he brought the books down upon the desk with a bang, and for the next week or two he and his companions amused themselves more liberally, and Mr. Meddon sat up till twelve o'clock every night trying to get right that error in his cash balance. There was another deficiency before long, and then Mr. Meddon began to be suspicious; for some whispers of Mark's evening diversions had come to his ears, and then followed swiftly detection, dismissal, and disgrace. For some reason the bank declined to prosecute; but the principals let Mr. Bidwell know, in most unequivocal terms, that Mark had better try the climate of another quarter of the globe for a season. He disappeared almost immediately, and our eyes knew

him no more, till he dawned upon us again in the character of the prodigal returned.

In his brief career, Mark had at least succeeded in making a name for himself, though not in a meritorious fashion, and such a one, wandering star as he was, could not vanish from our firmament without arousing some curiosity as to his place of banishment. For a long time popular opinion located him either in the bush of Australia or the backwoods of America; for in Shillingbury, and in better-informed places as well, there was a prevalent opinion that these promising young countries had been primarily called into being for the bestowal and possible reclamation of the failures of an effete civilisation—moral wash-tubs, so to speak, where they must get soused and may get cleansed. How the discipline of colonial life affected Mark Bidwell, the reader must judge for himself as he reads on. The place of his abode was gradually made clear, for Miss Judge, the post-mistress, so far shook off the bonds of official reticence as to remark that she had seen a letter addressed to him "United States of America," and, when Shillingbury knew so much, it did not trouble to localise his whereabouts further.

There was apparently no reason why Mark should have come back to us. There is, however, an old joke about the Folkshire youth who enlists under his country's banner, and then finds out that he has mistaken his profession. When he deserts, it is said that the authorities always know where to find him: to wit, in the village which gave him birth. Perhaps it was a feeling akin to this which gave back to us Mark Bidwell. His father had been dead several years, and those who remembered the relations formerly existing between him and his son were of opinion that, had the old gentleman lived, Mark would have fixed upon some other place for his abode.

When he quitted these parts, Mark was a short, stout, swarthy lad, with a ready tongue and quick, resolute eyes. He came back a well-grown man with an abundant crop of black beard and whiskers, a complexion many shades deeper and ruddier from the sun's glare, or from other unknown causes, and an abundant store of that confidence and self-gratulation which new countries seem to produce as freely as they do corn, and pork, and petroleum. In the course of his travels he must have come across the fountain of

Lethe, and have drunk a deep draught of oblivion as to the untoward conditions under which he left his native land. He seemed to have clean forgotten all about Charley Harbrow, and the Messrs. Lumley and their bank at Martlebury. He chatted freely enough about his father, remarking in a half-regretful, half-jocular strain, how glad the poor old chap would have been to see him back with a pocket full of money; for Mark never lost an opportunity of letting us know that his labour in lands beyond the sea had been very prosperous. From his tone in talking of his boyish days, and his regretful and appropriate remarks to the effect that people never knew the value of a good father till they had lost him, one would have thought that his boyhood's path had been a rose-bordered one, and that his relations with his progenitor must have been simply ideal. Mark would observe in an airy manner that he could never have endured the restraints of office-work, or indeed of town-life of any kind; a walk in life freer and less circumscribed was what his nature required, and he would impress upon his hearers as plainly as modesty would allow—there was not much of this virtue left in Mark—that the loss which art, or science, or commerce, or manufactures had suffered by his withdrawal had been amply made up to the world in general by the stimulus which his tact and energy had given to the particular industry of the district in which his lines had fallen. The advent of a man ready to talk all day long on any conceivable subject—frequent reversions to talk of Mark Bidwell, Esq., being understood—with plenty of money to spend, and no occupation to bind him, naturally made some stir in our local circle. Mark was genial, good-humoured, open-handed, and there was a decided inclination in Shillingbury to let bygones be bygones with regard to that fateful deficiency in Mr. Meddon's accounts. I am not sure that memory would have been so obliging and charity so ready, had he come back with a tattered coat and a disposition to appeal to his father's friends for help; but Shillingbury in such case would, no doubt, have come up to the normal line of benevolence. Mark lived for a month or so at The Black Bull, and during that time made a void in the interior recesses of the cellars greater than would have been caused by six months' consumption at the ordinary rate. Several times he was absent for a week or ten days at a stretch, seeing to

the settlement of his affairs, but when this business was finished he proclaimed his intention of making his home in Shillingbury, and as a preliminary step took lodgings at Miss Judge's rooms over the post-office.

The occupancy of Miss Judge's lodgings had always been held to be, in itself, a certain title of respectability. Miss Judge was very particular as to the sort of lodger she took in, and exacting in the matter of references and prepayment in case of dealing with a stranger. During Dr. Unwin's time the successive curates had all lodged with her; but now, as Mr. Northborough had decided to dispense with all spiritual aid in ruling the parish, she had to depend more on chance comers. Miss Judge's rooms were vacant when Mark gave out his intention of settling down in Shillingbury, and she, having heard the various reports about the fine fortune which he had brought home with him, gladly accepted him as a tenant. Mark made his rooms very comfortable, and went about here and there looking at houses which were to let, and naturally, as soon as people heard of this, they began to allot this or that young lady to him as a helpmeet. It was whispered that more than one damsel would be ready to listen, should he draw near as a suitor. He was decidedly a good-looking fellow in spite of his black hair and dark skin—dark as a Spaniard's almost. When he had first come amongst us it was something of a surprise that he did not appear in a slouch felt hat, a red shirt, a pair of untanned boots, and a belt well-furnished with revolvers and bowie-knives, and that on his way down he had made such good use of his time in London as to come out, as far as his clothes went, in the very height of fashion. Men wore embroidered shirts in those days, and the needlework which meandered over Mark's bosom was a wonder to behold. His velvet waistcoats, his scarves with two pins—a major pin and a minor pin linked by a long chain—his varnished boots, and his white silk hat, carried many a pang of jealousy to our less travelled youth; and went some way to give Mark the reputation of a lady-killer. The ladies as a rule set him down as a bit of a rattle, but on the whole a decided acquisition to the town; and the men were not unfriendly, though now and then a hint might be dropped that Mark talked a little too much about himself and his doings in the new world, and that all his stories ran in one

groove—how he had shut up this man, and scored off that, and knocked all the wind out of the other. The anecdotes of those occasions, if any such had ever been, when Mark came off second-best, were kept diligently in the background; but those little dinners which Mark gave at The Black Bull, and afterwards at his rooms, made us indulgent to such trifles as the above.

For many years—a dozen or so that is—Miss Carrie Ticeman, the only child of Mr. Samuel Ticeman, our leading merchant, corn miller, and maltster, had been the recognised belle of Shillingbury. Her father was a man well-to-do, and Miss Carrie, as things go in rural England, was looked upon as a very good match. Though she was not a beauty, she had quite the average share of good looks, and she had not remained Miss Ticeman all these years for the want of opportunities of changing her name. She had received many offers of marriage, and one of them, that of the Rev. Andrew White, one of Dr. Unwin's curates, she had accepted; but the outcome of this affair had not been a happy one, and judging from the firmness with which Miss Carrie refused all subsequent prayers for her favour, it must have given her a distaste for matrimony altogether; but before Mark Bidwell had been home three months it looked as if she meant to relent and once more to look kindly upon the ruder sex.

As soon as Mark's attentions became "particular," and his name to be coupled with Miss Ticeman's in a suggestive manner, it was remarked that there recurred amongst the local young men a tendency to recall to memory that dark spot in Mark's history. Hints were plentifully dropped in Mr. Ticeman's hearing that, though Bidwell was a very nice fellow, a man of the world, and all that sort of thing, yet everybody knew why he had to leave the country, and now everybody was asking for a little information about his life on the other side of the Atlantic, and likewise as to the securities in which this fine fortune of his was invested. One or two more daring spirits entered into relations with the principal tailor in Martlebury, and dazzled our eyes with some wonderful things in the way of lounging-coats, made of stuffs which looked as if they might have been rubbed against a rainbow. Arthur Suttaby, a smart young fellow who farmed a nice estate of his own, appeared one evening at a dinner-

party at Mr. Merridew's with a crush-hat in his hand, and Mark, who was present without one, evidently felt the blow, for the next week he had a similar article specially sent down from London.

It was plain that all the youth of Shillingbury were on fire; that this threatened irruption of our returned prodigal into their garden, and his manifest intention of attempting, at least, to pluck the fairest flower therein, had put them upon their mettle. It seemed, also, as if they had thoroughly taken to heart the maxim that all is fair in love, for some of the hints and whisperings before-named certainly looked very like backbiting. Of these, however, Mr. Ticeman did not take much heed. Either he had satisfied himself fully as to Mark's eligibility, or he had fallen under the spell of our returned prodigal's eloquence—eloquence which never let the listener lose sight of the fact that the speaker was one of the finest fellows living—for he put no obstacle in the way of Mark's approach to his daughter. The cloud gradually cleared away from Miss Carrie's brow, the sorrow was expelled from her heart, and in less than a year from the date of Mark's return she had consented to become Mrs. Bidwell. Mark hired a pretty little house called The Hollies, a short distance from the town, and set about the furnishing and decorating in a fashion which, according to local judgment, was almost sinful in its extravagance. Let him be ever so rich, he was hardly justified in filling his house with Turkey carpets, and mirrors, and gilt tables. At Mr. Winsor's, or at The Latimers itself, things could hardly be on a grander scale. Mark was extravagant, no doubt, but his extravagance, as the future showed, had method in it.

The wedding was the grandest ever known in Shillingbury. The thing was to be done, and there were signs that it would be done well; so the worsted rivals of the male sex, and the maiden friends who, in the first days of the engagement, had let the world know that Carrie Ticeman had never thrown dust into their eyes by her abuse of matrimony and men in general, modified their rancour, and were all bidden to the marriage-feast. Mr. Baring Drummond, the gentleman who was understood to be conducting Mark's financial business in town, came down to officiate as the best man, and, besides this, made a very witty and appropriate speech, and drank a great deal of Mr. Ticeman's champagne at the

breakfast. The bride and bridegroom went to Paris, and in the course of a month were back again at The Hollies, receiving wedding calls and returning the same.

For a time the stream of wedded life at The Hollies flowed on happily enough. Mr. Drummond came down on a visit several times, and made a most favourable impression upon old Mr. Ticeman. When he would describe the readiness with which fortunes were made nowadays in coffee, in sugar, in corn, and a dozen other things, Mr. Ticeman would heave a regretful sigh that his career had not lain in the metropolis instead of a sleepy country town. Mr. Drummond was seemingly in the inner circle of high finance, and talked glibly of mighty names and of seven or eight per cent. as safe as the Bank. Once Mr. Ticeman was tempted to commit to Mr. Baring Drummond a loose thousand or so for employment, and consulted his son-in-law there anent; but Mark spoke strongly against anything of the kind. Drummond was a good fellow, but venturesome, and, as to spare cash, Mark was sure his father-in-law would be able to find use for it at home as time went on. The future disclosed how true a prophet Mark was in this matter.

On the strength of his reputed fortune, Mark had got credit easily enough, and as Mr. Ticeman's son-in-law, he might have had delivered to him on trust the entire stock of the retail traders in the town. He did extend his patronage to them pretty liberally, and to the Martlebury shopkeepers as well; but after a time a whisper was heard that Mr. Mark Bidwell's faculty for paying was not so pronounced as his habit of ordering. These whispers grew ever louder and more persistent, and coming to Mr. Ticeman's ears, gave him much discomfort; but before he could say anything to Mark on the subject the crash had come—a cheque signed "Mark Bidwell" had been returned by the Metropolitan and Midland Bank—for Mark had not ventured to open an account at Lumleys'—the tradespeople had taken alarm, and The Hollies was destined to know the presence of the man in possession. The inevitable quarter of an hour with Mr. Ticeman was a very bad one for Mark, but he bowed his head to the tempest, admitted his foolishness, and proclaimed his intention of going back once more to subdue the wilderness in the New World, and to wring a fresh fortune

out of the stubborn soil. He had trusted a friend and had been cruelly deceived, for Mr. Baring Drummond had levanted, and taken with him almost the whole of his fortune. Still one ray of comfort was left to him. He had caught sight of the cloven foot in Mr. Drummond early enough to warn Mr. Ticeman to have nothing to do with him. This reflection at least would be left to comfort him as he worked at his lonely toil in the Far West.

But he never left Shillingbury. He was cunning enough to know that poor old Ticeman would make any sacrifice rather than suffer his child to be taken away to the other side of the world. There was a sale at The Hollies, the proceeds of which went towards paying Mark's debts. The betrayed, or the betrayer, kept a bold front to the world, lamenting his confiding weakness and warning his hearers to trust nobody. Some pitied him, but already a suspicion was gaining ground that if Mr. Baring Drummond had taken flight with nothing else besides Mark Bidwell's fortune he would soon be short of ready-money. Mr. Ticeman furnished a small house in the town for his daughter and her husband, and the latter was taken on to perform certain vague, ill-defined duties in the old man's business at a salary of two hundred a year, nominal, but Mr. Ticeman, though now disliking and distrusting his son-in-law, took care that money should never be wanting whenever it seemed necessary for his daughter's comfort. After this, disbelief in the real existence of Mark's fortune rapidly gained ground, in spite of the fabled simplicity and credulity of country-folk. Antony Merridew, who heard something about the affair in London, declared that Mark had come back from America almost penniless, that he had first travelled down to Shillingbury incog., and finding that our town contained an heiress, had gone back to London, and induced Mr. Baring Drummond to advance the money necessary to open and carry on the campaign for the capture of her fortune. Mr. Drummond was by profession one of those gentlemen who frequently make the Atlantic voyage, and by their proficiency in games of skill and chance generally manage to make enough to pay their passage and something more. Mark and he had met when the former returned to England, and most likely, being birds of a feather, had arranged to hawk in company should they either of them find game worthy of their notice.

As years went on, Mark did less and less in return for his salary, but this did not prevent him complaining more and more bitterly of the sacrifice of himself and his fortune which he was compelled to make on account of his wife's disinclination to leave her father in his old age. To listen to him as he would swagger and talk of his own capabilities, and of the berths with handsome salaries attached which would be forced upon him as soon as he should show his face in America, one would have fancied that he was conferring a positive boon upon Mr. Ticeman by sauntering uselessly about the premises for an hour or so in the morning, and gossiping with the customers on market-day, instead of being a pensioner on the old man's bounty. Mark was a pitiful braggart, as indeed are nine-tenths of those men who talk of nobody or nothing but themselves and their own doings, and who want to make the world believe that they are necessarily the master spirits in whatever combination they may happen to appear. The free air, the absence of those vices which are supposed to be the peculiar accidents of a worn-out society, had not purged away his original taint. In the course of time there sprang up a sort of fellowship between him and Walter Tafnell, who was now well on the slope of his downward course; though Mark, when he first came home, was loud in his denunciations of Walter as a mean-spirited sluggard, with not enough pluck to go into the next county to earn a sovereign. Both of them were at heart lazy, selfish fellows, and the community of their aims was now a force sufficient to draw them together. As they sat in the club room at The White Horse, Walter sucking his pipe and imbibing his gin-and-water in boozy silence, and Mark, shabby as his companion, blustering about his farms and cotton-fields, his flocks and herds in America, a moralist might have been puzzled to say which system of child-spoiling—the over-coddling or the hardening—had been attended with the most untoward results.

A FEW ANACHRONISMS.

WHEN old General Fürstenberg ventured to inform Voltaire, in the most delicate manner possible, that he had committed a slight error in his History of the War, in having mentioned a battle as fought in April, which had really been fought in October, the great author replied :

"Well, fool, it was fought, then; no matter when."

The master of Ferney was never very particular in the matter of chronology. While a guest at the court of Mannheim, he wrote his tragedy of *Olympia*, in which occurs a scene in the Temple of Ephesus, though the "time" of the play is exactly two hundred years from the date of the destruction of that famous structure. Yet this same writer ventures to sneer at Shakespeare for having introduced gunpowder in *Hamlet*. That the bard of Avon was no slave to the dictates of chronology, that he committed the most glaring anachronisms, is manifest to all students of his deathless works. He was no scholar, knowing, as rare Ben tells us, "small Latin and less Greek," consequently, he had no scruples regarding dates. Had Voltaire studied his works as diligently as he pretended to have done, he could have picked out dozens of errors in chronology which put the famous gunpowder business into the shade. For instance, in *Troilus and Cressida*, we have Hector talking of Aristotle, though our old friend, "the merest school-boy," is well aware that Hector was dead at least six hundred years ere Aristotle came upon the earth; and again, in this selfsame play, one of the characters compares the nerves of Ajax to those of the bull-bearing Milo of Crotona, who was not in being until centuries after the son of Telamon. But the most amusing slip of all occurs in the last act, where Pandarus talks about a Winchester goose!

—but that my fear is this,

Some galled goose of Winchester would hiss.

However, as this occurs in a speech partly addressed to the audience at the close of the play, some little laxity may, we suppose, be allowed.

In *Coriolanus*, we have Menenius speaking of Alexander the Great, and the hero himself complaining bitterly of the degradation to which he must stoop in having to beg the voices of Dick and Hob—two names which we may safely swear the Romans of that day never heard of. As we have remarked, these slips are allowable to one who knew little Latin and less Greek, but Shakespeare must have studied English History; indeed, we have ample proof that he did; yet we have him in *King Lear* making Edgar talk about the curfew, and in *King John* he several times makes mention of cannons and gunpowder, though neither was invented until one hundred and fifty years after the death of that

monarch. And he even goes so far as to speak twice, in *Henry the Sixth*, of Machiavel, though that "subtle politician" was alive in the twentieth year of Henry the Eighth, and, consequently, the poet must have known all about the life and death of a remarkable man who lived so near his own time; yet does he bring him on the stage years before he was born.

After all, Shakespeare is the least offender amongst our elder poets. What can we think of scholars like Beaumont and Fletcher, when, in their *Humorous Lieutenant*, they have Demetrius, an immediate successor of Alexander the Great, entering from his chamber with a pistol in his hand!—about fifteen hundred years before firearms were thought of. Dryden was another sinner in the matter of anachronisms. In *Edipus*, he speaks of the machines in the theatre at Athens, though he must have known full well that neither plays nor theatres were heard of until about five hundred years after his hero's death.

Now, as a sort of justification of our own authors and their transgressions, we will select a few choice samples of anachronisms from the great Greek and Roman writers. Sophocles, in his *Electra*, tells us of the death of Orestes, who, he supposes, was thrown from his chariot and killed during the Pythian games. Now, these games were not instituted until over six hundred years after the death of young Orestes.

Euripides, in his *Pheniosse*, the subject of which, it will be remembered, is the invasion of Thebes by Polynices and the Argives, we have Teresias talking of his giving the victory to Athens against Eumolpus. As a matter of fact, the Eumolpus war took place four generations before the Theban war.

The comic poets of Rome and Athens, as may be imagined, showed very little respect for chronology; in fact, they showed no respect at all; as witness Alexis, in his comedy of *Hesione*, introducing Hercules drinking from a "Thericlean cup," a species of goblet invented by one Thericles, a Corinthian potter, who flourished some eight hundred years after the supposed period of Hercules. Diphilus, in his *Sappho*, has Archilochus and Hipponax both addressing the "burning" lady, though Hipponax was dead a century before she was born, and she was dead almost as long ere Archilochus was born. Then we have the great Plautus, in his *Amphitruon*, causing Belphego to talk about

Golden Philipps, a money not coined until nine hundred years after the days of Amphytrion. These are only a few examples culled hastily from the ancient authors; but, were we required to do so, we could give some thousands of such. Indeed, almost all great works contain some glaring anachronisms.

As for our modern "three-volume novelists," some of their blunders are simply ludicrous. We have heard of an author who has the moon kindly condescending to rise twice the same night. We know an author who has somebody blown up by dynamite, which explosive was, at the period he writes of, not even thought of.

Our magazines and weekly journals teem with such blunders; and really, when we come to think of the extraordinary mistakes committed by our great writers, we ought to be surprised that there are not a great deal more slips of the pen amongst the smaller fry of literature. Some of the most amusing blunders in modern drama we find in Boucicault's Irish play, *The O'Dowd*. One would think that the "undying Dion" was of all men the most competent to write correctly respecting the "distressful country," yet hear what an eminent critic has to say anent the above play: "*The O'Dowd* is described by its author as 'a new study of Irish life and character of the present day;' the element of novelty, however, is not confined to the 'study,' but extends to the 'Irish life and character' as well. If such characters as those depicted exist in Ireland, they must be so extremely new that nothing short of study can find them. A glimpse of the future is offered by the geographical novelty of the 'County Nemara,' and an archæological reference to Ireland's 'One Duke' brings us back thirteen years in the direction of the good old times. An election scene with public nomination, which the Ballot Act abolished, also revives pleasing memories. The principal opportunity for emotional acting is given near the end of the play, when, after three years' absence, the young hero returns unchanged, except in dress, and is recognised by nobody."

This is rather severe on the author of *London Assurance*, who, however, has, no doubt, long since become accustomed to that sort of thing.

In the new opera of *The Canterbury Pilgrims*, which has been produced lately with such success at Old Drury, and the "time" of which is about 1390, we have

the old innkeeper calling his pretty daughter a "hoyden," a term not invented until *The Country Wife* was written in the seventeenth century.

Ah well! Has not old Homer himself, the father of all poets, been caught napping on several occasions?

HAREBELLS.

A stretch of common land, abloom
With golden gorse and yellow broom,
And bright with bracken sprays,
Just touched through all their summer green
With autumn gold. A placid scene—
Fair spot for restful days.

A grey old church of time-touched stone,
With porch and turret ivy-grown,
And chancel-window red,
Lifts lonely here its ancient walls,
And, where the holy shadow falls,
Sleep sound the quiet dead.

I sit me down among the graves,
The gentle west wind softly waves,
And little ripples pass

Across the greensward at my feet,
And stir the countless blossoms sweet
That deck the graves' green grass.

How gay they show, these narrow homes
Of silent rest! The wild bee roams
From flowerful mound to mound;

A throstle's carol in the tree,
Full, heart and voice, of summer glee,
Scarce breaks the calm profound.

How love hath decked the blessed spot!
Here pansy and forget-me-not

Make borders round a rose;
Here, through a lily's parian cup
On slender column lifted up,
The golden sunshine shows.

But in a corner all alone,
I see a grave without a stone,
Without a planted flower;
How long, how long since love knelt there,
In sore bereavement's first despair,
In woe's first aching hour?

No mark of love's regret is seen,
Yet is the lonely grave-plot green,
And clothed from head to foot
With bonny harebells, wild and blue,
Of wind-like lightness, heaven's own hue,
That here have taken root.

They toss their heads with sunny grace,
Above that nameless resting-place,
And flutter in the breeze;
No blossom carven from the stone,
No white exotic newly-blown,
Shows comelier than these.

I stretch my hand to pluck a bell,
I murmur: "Nature doeth well,
She chooseth this lone spot,
Where no love-tokening flower is seen,
And spreads her harebells blue and green,
O'er graves by man forgot."

A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XLVIII. EXEUNT OMNES.

THE part of Archie's narrative which fixed and fascinated Mrs. Tuck most, was his identification of Sir Arthur Denzil as a man named Smart. This was a stunning

blow to her for two reasons. In the first place she had made so much of Sir Arthur, not in her house only, but in her neighbourhood. Therefore, her first impulse on coming to herself was to convince Archie of her profound distrust of this man from the first. It was a continual wonder to her how he could be what her nephew had assured her he was—a gentleman of good family and fortune. It was curious how this comparatively little important feature in the transformation scene presented to her riveted the attention of Mrs. Tuck. Even when Ida rejoined her and Archie, instead of being greeted with the congratulations she expected, she was reminded of Mrs. Tuck's remark that the manners of the so-called Sir Arthur were a mixture of those of a barber, barmaid, and billiard-marker. Ida did not remember this remark, remembered only one lecture on manners apropos of Sir Arthur, and this a lecture to herself on her freezing reception of that gentleman's flippant advances. Mrs. Tuck had sweetened this lecture by a witty comparison of Ida to that superb butterfly, which was protected from its natural enemies by its resemblance to unpalatable specimens of another species. So Ida was protected from mankind—her natural enemies—by seeming to belong to the haughty and heartless order of girls, whereas she was all humility and tender heart. This lecture Ida remembered, but of the other, in which Mrs. Tuck had spoken of Sir Arthur's manners as being "much too free and easy," Ida had no recollection, unless she referred to her remark that his manners were "easy and free," with an ease which was aristocratic, and a freedom which was friendly.

However, on Ida's rejoining them, and all through lunch, Mrs. Tuck could hardly talk of anything but the transparent imposture of Sir Arthur. The touchstone by which to distinguish the true aristocratic manner from all spurious imitations was, she held, its freedom from affectation. And she wound up with the smart aphorism, which, we think, expresses more truth than most such sharply-cut and sweeping apothegms, "Affectation is the only vulgarity."

But there was a second reason for Mrs. Tuck's mind dwelling with such point and persistency upon the unmasking of Sir Arthur. It was also the unmasking of Dick. She saw at once that information received from Sir Arthur was at the bottom of the disinterestedness with which Dick

had pressed his suit upon Ida when she seemed penniless; and of the magnanimity with which he had withdrawn it on Ida's confession that she had no heart to give him.

Much, therefore, of Mrs. Tuck's open indignation with the detected Sir Arthur was due to her secret indignation with the detected Dick. She said nothing of this now nor hereafter, not merely because, "*Le bruit est pour le fat, la plainte pour le sot. L'honnête homme trompé s'éloigné et ne dit mot,*" but because an open admission of Dick's worthlessness would have been an open admission of her own infatuation. But her very inability to express her indignation, made her the more bitter against her own idol, and henceforth she had done with Dick, to his immense amazement and indignation. On receipt of her letter announcing that she had cast him off for ever because of his collusion with the wretched creature Smart, Dick was much in the mood of Timon—destitute, and deserted by the ingrates he had crowned with favours. It was not merely that his creditors—men to whom for years he had given his custom—turned upon him; but even his own aunt, to whose matchmaking mania he had sacrificed much hunting and some shooting, and had been willing to sacrifice his very self—even she turned upon him in this savage way. No wonder Dick felt sore and soured. Where now was he to turn? His aunt, who owed him an indemnity, if ever a man was owed an indemnity, had cast him off. His creditors wouldn't trust him for another penny or another day. What was to be done? He stood face to face with working for his own living. And to this base use he had at last to come. He became an Irish agent—the one post in the world for which he was fitted at once by his extraordinary physical indifference to danger, and by his extreme moral abhorrence of debt due from others.

But to return. After lunch Archie had to hurry off to an appointment with Smart, whom he had accompanied to London to keep him in sight till he had shown him the church in which his mother was married, and the very entry of the marriage in the register. This Smart had done yesterday, and to-day Archie had arranged to meet him, and to do what he could to help him as his father's old friend. Smart frankly confessed that he had gone to the deuce, and had no Orphean secret for getting back again, unless money

set him above temptation—as he put it himself :

“*Facilis descensus Averni sed revocare gradum hoc opus,*’ and the opus without opes is the deuce and all.” Eventually, Archie gave him money enough to take him to Australia, and to set him up there fairly, but his passion for gambling reduced him at last to a sharper’s shifts—to a life of great risks and wretchedness, and a death in a disreputable brawl.

On Archie’s departure, Mrs. Tuck kissed Ida fervently, and congratulated her in the manner of one who had helped her to the happiness on which she felicitated her.

“It was all for the best, you see, my dear,” she said, speaking as an impersonated special providence might speak to a mortal who had once doubted the wisdom of its dealings. “It was all for the best, you see, my dear. The course of true love never runs smooth, because if it ran smooth it wouldn’t be true love. It’s friction that brings out the warmth. Ah, my dear,” she sighed, “love is like every other child’s toy ; we shouldn’t prize it if it wasn’t kept a bit from us.” Now this sigh was given not only to the vanity of human wishes in general, and to her own in particular, but also to the prospect of losing Ida as “her very own.”

“Well, Mrs. Pybus,” she said afterwards to Mrs. John, “when we undertook to be mothers to these orphans, we little thought of this return in our old age to make us mothers-in-law.” A plaintiveness not wholly jocose. She dreaded the dread sentence of mother-in-lawry, because of the prospect of partnership and collision with Mrs. John, which she feared it would involve. She knew so little of the Rev. John, as to imagine he would be rejoiced to resign his living, and to make The Keep his home. The Rev. John did indeed quit Edgburn soon after, but it was for London. He exchanged Edgburn for a parish in the East End, which included within its bounds two eligible nurseries for the Millennium, a lying-in and a foundling hospital. Therefore, Mrs. Tuck’s grievance turned out to be the opposite of that she feared. Mrs. John was not half often enough, or long enough at The Keep, for Mrs. Tuck came truly to know Mrs. John—that is to say, to love her.

Anastasia soon became known to the newspapers in her real character. With all her care and cleverness she could not keep the living lie standing much longer. It was doomed, as all lies are doomed soon

or late. For a lie is like a building out of plumb, which time, and tempest, and the law of gravitation are at incessant work to drag down ; which needs ever-renewed stays and buttresses, and the most harassing and sleepless care of its architect ; and which, nevertheless, and after all, is at the mercy of every wind that blows.

She lived for a little time by writing piteous begging-letters to old ladies, and paying piteous begging visits to gentlemen of middle age, and of such susceptible temperaments, that the sight of “beauty brought t’ unworthy wretchedness” opened their purses to an extent which amazed themselves after she had departed. But soon her name began to appear once and again in the police reports, wherein she was finally described as “the most incorrigible, accomplished, and successful beggar and begging-letter writer in all London.”

Fortunately the company in whose employ Ben was injured, was the same as that to which Archie and Ida had done such service upon the occurrence of the accident. The directors proposed to acknowledge this service by a wedding present to Ida, but Archie, in declining this honour on behalf of Ida—who shrank from its publicity—begged in her name that mere justice should be done to Ben. Thus it came about that, on the case being investigated, Ben was not only exonerated, but praised and pensioned for his long and excellent record. Ben and Liz were established as lodgekeepers at the gate of The Keep. However, dear old Ben’s chief occupation came at last to be the making of engines for Archie’s little boy, while Liz never tired of telling, nor the boy of hearing, the old story of his father’s flight in his childhood from school.

“Why didn’t mamma nurse you when you runned away from school ?” looking up from his father’s knee with wide enquiring eyes.

“She wasn’t my mamma, Geoff, you know.”

“Liz says it was because you didn’t know mamma then,” indignantly, wroth that he should be supposed so silly as to believe there was ever a time when his father and mother didn’t know each other.

“No, I didn’t know her then, and I don’t think I know her quite yet, though I’ve been learning her all my life,” taking his wife’s hand, and looking into her face with a world of worship and love in his gaze. And, indeed, Ida was like that

fairly land in The Elvas, to which we have already alluded—chill and forbidding to those who looked at it from a distance, but a world of ever-widening wonder and beauty to those who made it their home.

OUR SHINING RIVER.

III.

At the first glance when Mr. Pyecroft met me in the inn-parlour, I saw that Charley had failed to give me an accurate impression of his character. I had expected to meet some shrewd, hard-headed man of the world, who, conscious of money power behind him, would have everything move in his own fashion. But the real man proved to be something very different; his manner was nervous and embarrassed, but at the same time rather deprecatory and conciliatory than overbearing, and he had a harassed, worried air that hardly agreed with the rôle of family autocrat and dictator that Charley had assigned him. The squire seemed nervously anxious to conciliate my good opinion, which, as he only knew me as the friend of the family scapegrace, seemed rather unaccountable. At the same time Mr. Pyecroft was very inquisitive as to his nephew's movements.

"It would be a sad disappointment to poor Claudia," he said, "if Charlwood could not join the party on the river."

As Charley had commissioned me to break to his uncle the tidings of his disastrous campaign in Paris, I thought this a good opportunity of bringing in the matter. Squire Pyecroft was shocked and distressed evidently, but showed no spark of anger against his nephew. It was an unfortunate idiosyncrasy of the Pyecrofts, he observed, that in youth they were generally rather wild, but happily in Charlwood's case there was strong good sense at the bottom, and he did not doubt that he would eventually prove a worthy supporter of the family honours. But all this showed how necessary it was that he should be speedily settled in a matrimonial way. And, as having a good deal of influence with his nephew, Mr. Pyecroft besought me in a quiet, humble, and imploring manner, to urge upon Charlwood to return to the bosom of his family, where everything would be forgotten and forgiven; and thereupon the family lawyers were only waiting to complete arrangements and settlements that would not only secure his future welfare, combined with Claudia's, but also put him in possession of

a moderate but sufficient sum of ready money.

In this last clause I saw the first touch of the dexterous management for which Mr. Pyecroft had the credit. It showed, too, that the squire was under no delusion as to his nephew's real character, but that for some sufficient reason of his own, he had made up his mind that his daughter should marry Charlwood.

Turning from the subject of Charlwood's affairs, Mr. Pyecroft gave me an apparently cordial invitation to visit Charlwood Hall. His wife and daughter were at the moment absent, having been persuaded to accompany Mrs. Boothby to Leamington with great intentions in the way of shopping—this accompanied by a significant smirk from Mr. Pyecroft, as if nothing less than Claudia's trousseau were in question. But the ladies would be home to dinner on the morrow, and rather dreading an evening alone with the squire, I postponed my visit accordingly to the following day.

Mr. Pyecroft seemed a little relieved at my decision, perhaps being himself a little shy of strangers. And then he remarked that on the following day he had to attend a meeting at Faringdon—a place not without its attractions for a visitor. The charms of Faringdon Hill had been described by an eighteenth century poet—a connection, indeed, of the family—the laureate Henry James Pye. The family name, indeed, should be correctly set forth as Pye-Croft, and they quartered in their bearing the arms of Pye and of Croft, and with this Mr. Pyecroft produced a little volume, solidly bound in calf, which he politely offered to lend me; it was a copy of the laureate's poem, which would be, at all events, a useful guide to the scenery of the neighbourhood, even if the poem itself failed to gratify a modern taste.

Before the evening was over, I almost repented of having chosen to remain at the hotel. The squire's company would have been better than none; and, as the shades of evening drew over the little town, the place wore an aspect of peaceful solitude that inspired something like terror in the unaccustomed mind. The omnibus had gone its last journey to the station, and all chance of getting away was at an end. It was necessary to fight off the feather-bed and four-poster as long as possible. The neat little inn-parlour was silent and deserted; its vases of flowers blushed unseen, except for one pair of dissatisfied eyes, while the pier-glass over the hearth

reflected one disconsolate visage. Then there came the sound of footsteps in the hall outside, raising sudden hopes of companionship. But the footsteps ceased and nobody entered. The same phenomenon was repeated—several times—and excited a certain curiosity. People were living and moving somewhere; but whence did they come and whither did they go? When I took up a position in the inn doorway to investigate the matter, nobody came; and the footsteps ceased altogether. Then a whiff of tobacco-smoke gave a clue to the secret, and an opened door revealed a solemn symposium—the little nightly tobacco parliament, that settled the affairs of the town and neighbourhood.

In such assemblies the talk is generally slow and interjectional, while the entrance of a stranger acts as a condensing jet on the not high pressure volume of conversational steam. There is the farmer with his ruddy face burnt a deep terra-cotta shade; the village traders almost as brown as the farmer, and sharing to some extent in the bucolic character. And the talk is all of hay—of how much this piece will give and how much that. All have an interest in the haymaking, seeing that the river-meadows are shared among them by lots, drawn by the tenants of the manor assembled in solemn court-leet. A great festival once this Lottmead celebration, a time for revelling and horse-racing, for a kind of pagan celebration, when the lord of the manor appeared crowned with a garland of flowers, and men and maids danced down the street to the music of the rustic orchestra. Even now the occasion is celebrated by something in the way of a feast—a last relic of the gay, bright country life of old. And now is the opportunity for the old memory of the district, the old fellow who is looked upon as something of a bore during the rest of the year, but who now springs at once into request and importance. He alone knows where the swaddle stones lie, the old-world boundary-stones that mark the different lots, and he alone can bring them triumphantly to light among the thick spring growth in the fields.

But with a little of this old-world lore, generally voted too trivial to engage the attention of sensible men, there is a general effort to sustain the conversation at a higher level—of cricket, for instance, and the doings of the local club, with allusions to the scoring of All England and the

Australians, of markets and prices, diversified by a story from the butcher, of a heifer which he drove from Faringdon, and which persisted in bolting into all the public-houses on the route. All this talk is washed down with moderate libations of ale, and seasoned with the standard jokes of the district, and well understood personal allusions, the dexterous introduction of which brings down the house in bursts of Homeric laughter. But as the speech is the west country Doric, rather thick in utterance, and with the words all run together, and delivered in a breath, a good deal of the talk is hardly intelligible to a stranger.

What a night that was for heat and sultry oppression! The feather-bed and the four-poster were hardly to be blamed, perhaps, nor the windows, that would only open an inch or two, for, in truth, the air outside was as hot and stifling as that within. The valley was like an oven, and the stone-roofs of Lechlade town intensified the heat. I thought, with a jealous pang, of how much more pleasantly Charley was housed, sleeping, probably, on the roof of the Crab, with the cool river washing below, and the gentle summer breeze stirring the awning, while the love-lorn nightingale made the woods resound with thrilling melody.

Rising early next morning, feverish and unrefreshed, I felt there was nothing for it but to make for the nearest hills and escape from the enervating heat, and the nearest hills were those I had seen from the bridge in the hazy distance.

Presently I had left the grey, lichen-covered roofs of Lechlade behind me, and took a last look at the graceful arch of the bridge, which is flanked on one side by a square, massive structure, which may have formerly done duty as a toll-house, but which seems to represent the chapel of ancient days, that once invited the prayers of the wayfarer. The bridge and the lock both bear the name of St. John, and this, I am told, from an old priory, or hospital, which stood close by the former, and the stones of which have probably done duty in repairing the bridge.

The way through the hot country lanes across the low-lying lands that border the river was inexpressibly sultry and oppressive. The climate struck one as quite tropical, and the fuchsias and geraniums that grew almost to the size of trees by the cottage-doors seemed to bear out the idea, while the blaze of heat was

accompanied by a perpetual hum of noisy and ferocious insects; and it was not much better when the road began to wind upwards from the plain, for the trees shut out every breath of air, while they afforded but scanty shelter from the sun.

But in the first patch of really satisfactory shadow, where an opening revealed a cool-looking sheet of water, covered with lilies and water-weeds, which belonged, I am told, to Buscot Park, I seated myself upon the trunk of a fallen tree and rested for a while, and drew Poet Pye from my pocket. I did not expect very much from the laureate, and, read under ordinary circumstances, he might have fallen rather flat, but here in this heat and hum he surprises and delights by his exact appreciation of the situation as he begins:

Now with meridian force the orb of day
Pours on our throbbing heads his sultry ray.

Here Sol intensely glows, and there the trees
Mix their thick foliage and exclude the breeze.

Except for the flies, which he does not mention, and which, perhaps, were not so troublesome a century ago, our poet has got the whole thing in beautifully, while the suggestion that follows is equally to our taste:

Come, let us quit these scenes, and climb yon
brow,
Yon airy summit where the zephyrs blow.

Yes, by all means let us have some zephyrs. The prospect gives one a start with renewed freshness. But the hill is steep and stony—a grand limestone hill—and an adamantine road, or perhaps Macadamantine would be more descriptive, for it seems to pave itself naturally with the sharp angular stones which the Scotch roadmaker has left as a gift to posterity. It is hard work for the horses toiling up the hill with a load of timber behind them; but the waggoners seem very careful of the poor beasts, and twine their brows with green leaves to keep off the flies. And then the rural quiet is disturbed by the sights and sounds of some big brick and tilery works, that strike one at first blush as rather out of place among the limestone, till the thought occurs that Bath is noted for its bricks as well as for its stone.

And then the air is rent with a strange roar and clatter, the meaning of which is not very evident, except that something strange and portentous is approaching, as the waggoners fly to their horses' heads, and a sudden silence comes over the

denizens of the air, as at the approach of a storm, or of some cruel bird of prey. One has misty notions of the strange monsters that once splashed and tumbled about among these colitic flags, and a turn in the road discloses something at first as horrible as any of the most ugly of these extinct animals. But, after all, it is nothing but a traction-train: a portentous engine, web-wheeled, with a long hissing neck, and a train of lumbering waggons behind, crawling and clanking along like some many-jointed dragon.

Then the road becomes solitary again, and yet is not altogether deserted. A gipsy-cart comes along with a dark-eyed damsel looking out, and then a knot of haymakers in search of another job. "Got any hay to cut, master?" they ask. "No, I don't happen to have any myself; but there are plenty Lechlade way, who are looking out for hands." This I happen to know from my friends of the symposium last night.

And then at the top of the hill, hot and dusty, there comes upon the cheek the soft westerly breeze, with a sweetness that only those who have toiled can fully enjoy; a soft caress that sends a thrill of joy through the frame, as if it were from the lips of Nature herself impersonated in some form of beauty.

Here are the zephyrs in good sooth. Poet Pye is no impostor, and his promise is gallantly fulfilled. The air is fresh and sweet about Faringdon, the grass greener than elsewhere, while herds of calves frisk and caper over the sward. I can credit the story of that Faringdon heifer, told by the butcher last night, after seeing the exploits of these calves.

Is there not a mild but pleasing excitement in entering a place before unvisited? Here is a new world, or the microcosm of one, about to be revealed. It will probably turn out very much like the other worlds you know, but there is always the chance of some charming surprise, or the place may be so outrageously ugly that you will fly from it in horror. Nothing of the latter kind is likely to occur at Faringdon. It is a thoroughly nice, clean, pleasant market-town; an upland town with hilly roads branching off from its central market-place, where a handsome market-house looks down upon some quaint timbered houses, upon sunny old-fashioned inns, with a pump that aspires to be an ornamental fountain in the centre, and a solid, solemn-looking old

church, with a broad, squat tower, looking down in its turn on all the rest. The elms which make a leafy background to the church form the avenue that leads to the manor-house of Laureate Pye, but the Pyes are gone now, and other birds build in their nests.

"Sum caulle this town Cheeping Farington, but there is other none, or very smaull market now at it," says old Leland, but he must have visited the place at a time of agricultural depression. Anyhow, in these days the town has a brisk, thriving appearance, with nothing decayed about it, but, on the contrary, an aspect of gentle progress, while it retains the least touch of quiet dignity as a town of ancient fame, where the bravest and best of all the Saxon kings once held their royal seat.

There is a sunny, pleasant bow-window that looks upon the market-place, where I spent a pleasant hour resting and assuaging the oolitic thirst I had contracted on the way—inadvertently I asked for a zephyr, and the young woman at the bar brought me a bottle of lemonade—and I looked out upon the gentle traffic of the town, expecting to see Squire Pyecroft's old thoroughbred prancing across the market-place. No doubt he puts up at The Crown, opposite, which has the air of being accustomed to justices of the peace, while we on this side are of a more free and democratic nature. There is a constant stream of people in and out of the room that is lighted by the sunny bow-window. Commercial men pass in and out, and exchange a continual fire of chaff with the sprightly barmaid. Farmers drive up, sunburnt and dusty, enter for a moment, and drive off to their hayfields again. Cheerful elderly gentlemen, in light alpaca coats, who look as if they had been something in the City and had retired to spend their days at Fairlawn or Sunnybank—these come in, just while the pony is being fed, and are almost as jocose as the bagmen with the barmaid aforesaid. And then boots comes in with a clatter to know if any gent is going off by this next train, which makes a clearance of the men of commerce, while the stream of droppers-in belonging to the town rather increases in volume. Then there is an old clothier from the west; not one who deals in old clothes; but old in himself, quite a petrification of a clothier, who drives his own horse and phaeton, and has driven the same horse and trap for the last five-and-twenty years.

I have almost forgotten Faringdon Hill,

and am glad to find that it is not far off, not one of those unapproachable peaks that rise from inhospitable deserts, but a mere stone's-throw from the town. A striking object from all the country round is Faringdon Hill with its crown of dark firs, that looms upon you wherever you may go in the low country by the river. But we have lost sight of the hill now it is so close at hand; still, the highway that leads so steeply upwards must surely bring us to it.

"A might go up that way," says a shock-headed rustic appealed to on the question; "there's a paath, but a man's rather saacy about that paath—very like he'd soommons 'a'."

There would be something awkward in a summons, perhaps to be heard before old Pyecroft himself, and involving a lengthened residence in the neighbourhood. So it is better to hark back, and by a narrow path between high walls to try for the summit. But hardly anyone, by the way, knows the place as Faringdon Hill. It is just Farinton Folly.

There is something curious about this name, quite characteristic of the contempt of the country mind for anything new or strange, which will not allow even Nature to indulge in any vagaries without a sneer. Had our people lived in the plains of Egypt, they would have called the pyramids Pharoah's Folly, and possibly with very good reason too. But there is something still more whimsical after all in treating this fir-crowned hill whence Alfred may have watched the camp-fires of the Danish host, as if it had been thrown up by somebody in a freak.

There is something solemn in the feeling of passing under the shadow of the pine-trees, with the soft, noiseless carpet of pine-needles beneath, and, between the openings of the trees, glimpses of what seems an almost boundless prospect. The solemn stillness is broken indeed by the shouts and laughter of children, for between school-hours it is a regular camping-ground for children who come from a distance to discuss their mid-day meal in cool and airy seclusion. The children's voices ring pleasantly enough among the dark aisles, while the very brow of the hill is left quite solitary and deserted, as if the youngsters felt that a sort of protecting charm encompassed it.

But the brow of the hill was not so solitary as it appeared at first sight, for, seated upon some rugs that were spread

n a little hollow overlooking the fairest part of the prospect, were two female forms. One was dark and foreign-looking, with an alert, vivacious expression, but already past the days of youth, while in the other, who turned upon me her dark, soft eyes with an almost startled expression, I recognised at once the original of the photograph—Charley's cousin Claudia.

The startled expression in Claudia's eyes was succeeded by one of interest and curiosity as she said a few words in a low voice to her companion.

"Yes, it must be so, I think," replied the other aloud, in a decidedly foreign accent. "Is it not that you are Mr. Penrice?" turning to me, who had advanced towards them.

Well, it is no use to meet on the top of a hill, and pretend we do not know each other.

"But if I should prove an impostor?" I urged. "Don't you want some proof of identity?"

"But no," cried the elder lady. "I shall know you are not an impostor. Come, I shall introduce you. Claudia, you shall know Mr. Penrice. Poor child!" in a confidential tone for my behalf. "She was so verri sorry that the cousin could not come—quite break her heart."

"Because I thought we should lose our journey on the river," interrupted Claudia eagerly, colouring with impatience. "But mamma has agreed to come, and now—But you know Mdlle. Vallon, of course? You must have heard of her from Charley."

So I had, perhaps, indistinctly, at some time or other. This was mam'selle, the late governess, now companion and so on, no doubt, still considering herself, probably, as Claudia's keeper and guardian. And now I learnt that the ladies had come home sooner than expected. It was provoking to find that I might have spent last evening in Claudia's company, and have made so much the more progress in our acquaintance. However, here they were now, having been driven over by the squire, who was at present busy at his meeting, while mam'selle and Claudia had come to kill the time on the hill.

"It is like a map from here," said Claudia, anxious to show everything in its best light to the stranger; "and we can trace the course of the river almost to Oxford, and then for a good way beyond. But I can't tell you all the places. If we had only a book——"

Upon this I drew Pye from my pocket, and Claudia seized upon him with delight. "The very thing!" she cried. "This will tell us everything. Let me read it out."

But mademoiselle held out her hand.

"Gif me that book," taking it from Claudia's hands and scanning it severely through her eye-glasses. "Yes, that will do," she said at last, handing back the book. "Pye is quite right; there is no lof in Pye. You may read that, Claudia."

I am not quite so sure about there being no love in Pye; I have not read it carefully enough to see. And then mademoiselle turns to me with a self-approving gesture.

"I take great care of my pupil. She shall know nothing about lof—no, not one word about lof till it is the time to marry the fiancé."

"Look! I have found the place," cried Claudia. "Now we will begin. Mr. Penrice, you must come over here, please."

And Claudia led the way to the northern slope of the hill, mademoiselle carefully keeping her eye-glass fixed upon us. And Claudia began in her soft, clear tones reading from poet Pye:

"First to the north direct your roving eyes——"

To this I demur. My eyes are not roving; they are fixed steadfastly in one direction. And that direction is Claudia's own eyes, which are looking into mine with childish confidence. Claudia wrinkles her nose disapprovingly.

"Don't interrupt, please. It spoils the rhythm."

"——roving eyes,

Where fair Oxonia's verdant hills arise.

There Barford's downs invite the healthful chase."

And so on for some pages with a description of the chase which is not interesting, and then comes more description:

"Emerging from the thicket's bosom there,
See Bampton's pointed steeple rise in air.

You see the steeple, I hope, Mr. Penrice!"

Yes, I thought I could make out the steeple, and Claudia went on reading:

"To farther distance now the prospect drawn,
Lo! Witney's spire diversifies the lawn,
Whose busy loom to balmy sleep supplies
A guard from wintry cold and freezing skies."

"Oh, he's a great poet, that Pye," I cried, laughing. "Shakespeare, himself, could never have described a blanket in such mellifluous verse."

"But isn't he a great poet?" asked Claudia innocently. "Not like Shakespeare or Spenser, perhaps. But we think a great deal of him in the family. But keep your

eyes on Witney, Mr. Penrice, for here comes :

"There Whickwood's oaks . . .
Thy woods, imperial Blenheim, close the view."

"But this is interesting ! " I cried. "Do you mean to say that is Blenheim—and those old Marlborough's woods ?"

"But Oxford we can't see," continued Claudia, gratified that her favourite view was respected. "We can't see it, and Pye tells us why :

"And lo, where healthy Cumner's envious
height,
Hides thy imperial city from my sight."

For Cumner Hill rises at the extreme end of the ridge that stretches away in an unbroken line from Faringdon, and shuts out the towers of Oxford.

"But now," cried Claudia with importance, "you must turn round more to the west, and make out the course of the Thames,

"As bending upward towards her scanty source,
We backward trace the river's narrowing course,
Her pointed spire, see Lechlade proudly rears,
And lowly Cricklade on her banks appears.

Here is a note about Cricklade: 'Cricklade is a town in Wiltshire, from which the navigation of the Isis begins, said to have been originally called Greeklade, from the Greek language being first taught there in England, though Camden seems to doubt this.'

"If Camden doubts it, I am afraid there is nothing in it," said a grave voice from the thicket.

Claudia turned and cried :

"Oh, papa, I'm glad you have come, but we have had a very pleasant time."

"Yes, they have been reading Pye," cried mademoiselle from her corner, where I fancy she had been sleeping. "Pye is quite good ; there is no lof there."

AFTER LONG YEARS.

PROLOGUE.

A DARK, damp, miserable evening in November. A wind that has a wintry sound in it, and that seems to be gradually working itself up into a fury, whistling eerily round the house, rattling the casements, and sending great whiffs of smoke down the chimneys. Outside, pitch darkness ; inside, a desolation that no more material darkness could give, that nothing in nature has the power to create—the desolation of death. Do what you will with it, clothe it in what garb you will. call it the

angel of consolation or release, what you will, there is ever about it this sensation, not to be reasoned away, and not to be dismissed ; but to-night, and in this house, there is associated with the grim presence another and more terrible companion. To the sense of desolation is added that of terror, for it is in no gentle, no ordinary guise that death has appeared at Hazledean, but in the form of murder.

Stephen Ellerton of Hazledean lies on his own bed, in his own room, stone dead, with nothing but the livid mark on his forehead to tell the tale.

A man of many friends, the last man in the world for whom such an end could have been foretold or foreshadowed ; kindly, generous, neighbourly. This is what all the countryside will be saying to-morrow, when they hear of the deed that has been done ; what is being said already throughout the length and breadth of West Saxford, on the outskirts of which flourishing market-town the house stands. A large, rambling, old-fashioned house it is, with many pleasant nooks and corners and quaint eccentricities of architecture appertaining to it, with spacious, smooth-shaven lawns and shady alleys, and pleasant and productive gardens ; a dear old house, with which people fall in love at first sight, and which, having once felt the glamour of it in their daily life, they can never by any means forget ; a house from which the beauty and the brightness have been suddenly and ruthlessly rent away, to be cursed by the memory of this night's work for ever.

And the man who is lying there in his last sleep, with eyes that have closed upon it and all else that is transitory for ever, was so proud of it !

It is seven years ago since he came to it—not quite six, since he brought his bride home to it. A man in the prime of life, in easy circumstances, of no fixed occupation, but ever finding something to set his hand to for the good of those about him, and doing it with all his might. Very simple, very honest, very charitable—a man whose blood cries out from the ground, with a cry that is full not only of bitterness, but of reproach.

The place was much that it is now, when he chanced upon it in the course of a visit he was paying in the neighbourhood, and bought it ; but he has expended upon it since time, trouble, taste, and money. Of the four things, in a case like this, the last is perhaps the least. It would have been an

easy thing to spoil Hazeldean for all time to come ; but to the lover of the beautiful it has been no herculean task to make it an almost perfect specimen of its own simple style. A home his boy should be proud of when he came to be a man ! The kind lips that are cold now have smiled happily at the thought so many and many a time, and to-night what is there left for the little lad to remember the place by for ever ?

Poor little Steenie ! lying already in the blissful unconsciousness of his first sleep, though the tears are still wet on his curling lashes, and the pitiful petition to be taken to say " Good-night to father," has scarcely died away on his pouting lips !

The house is so quiet, no wonder the child sleeps soundly. A couple of hours ago, it was all turmoil and confusion ; men were rushing in and out, up and down—these, in search of that medical aid which would, they knew too well, avail nothing ; these, of some clue, how faint soever, to the mystery which surrounded the murder. From every corner of the house the women had gathered together, sobbing and screaming, with the exception of two only—the newly-made widow and her sister. Of these two, the first has lain for hours—for she is so lying still—stunned into unconsciousness of the irreparable calamity which has befallen her ; the second, moving about from first to last like a woman in a dream, her face set, her eyes full of awe-struck enquiry, has never shed a tear. An artist, seeing her to-night, might take her as his model for a Cassandra struck dumb, for Margaret Dunscombe is no ordinary-looking woman, and is in no ordinary mood. It is precisely amongst the old sculptures of Greece and Rome that one would look instinctively for the prototype of her grand figure, with its full yet graceful curves—of her small, shapely head and clear-cut features.

If there were any truth in the received evidences of high birth and breeding, then ought this daughter of a simple Cheshire yeoman to be a princess in disguise ; nor would she, should the part fall to her, take unkindly to it. There are, in all stations, persons born to command, and of such this woman—two-and-thirty her last birthday, and in the full prime of her peculiar style of beauty at an age when most women are beginning to show signs of fading—is one. People instinctively look up to her and appeal to her, and it has become so much the habit of her life to be so looked up to and appealed to, that she never dreams of

shirking in any degree the responsibilities thus laid upon her. She has power, as the phrase goes, and she knows it, and is far too inexorably truthful to deny it. Has the knowledge made her hard ? Is there such a thing as being too sure of oneself and one's own judgment, how clever soever one may be, and has Margaret Dunscombe yet to discover it ? She is surely to be pitied if she have, for there is but one teacher for such as she, and that hardest of all mistresses takes her time !

Nobody would think to see her, the servants whisper to each other, that Miss Dunscombe had been as fond of the master as she seemed. To think how they used to talk and laugh, till it seemed at times as if those two had all the fun to themselves, and there was nothing left for the mistress to do but sit and smile at their nonsense—and to see her now without so much as a tear, and showing no no more feeling than a stone. She was always " main odd " was Miss Dunscombe.

It is past nine o'clock. Mrs. Ellerton has recovered her senses, and has heard all there is to tell—where they found her husband and how—and the one poor comfort that remains to those who loved him.

" They say he must have died instantaneously. The one blow must have done it. There are no marks of violence anywhere else upon him," Margaret Dunscombe says, standing over the bed, on which the other is lying, and speaking still out of that strange calm of hers. " He looks as if he were asleep."

" How long had he lain there ? How long do they think ? "

" They cannot tell," Margaret says gently. " He left the club about the usual time, so as to be at home here for dinner, and you know he was more than an hour late when we sent James in search of him. I suppose he came straight home, but who can tell ? Somebody may have met him. I should think somebody is sure to have seen him between this and the town, but we don't know yet. We know nothing yet, but the one thing. Oh, Lucy, my darling ! " and she flings herself on her knees by the bedside, and throws her arms imploringly out towards the slight figure writhing upon it in an agony of mind which is worse to see and to endure than physical pain. " What can I do for you ? What can anybody do for you now ? "

As she speaks, a low, hesitating tap makes itself heard at the bedroom-door,

and a woman's head, peering cautiously in, follows it.

"If you please, Miss Dunscombe, you're wanted."

It is past nine o'clock, and surely no one would ask to see her to-night, of all nights in her life, without urgent cause. Is it possible they have heard anything, found out anything, already? She best knows why, at the mere thought of it, she turns pale and sick, and feels, for the moment, all her calm deserting her. The message does not rouse Mrs. Ellerton, and Miss Dunscombe, rising from her knees, motions to the maid to go out again, and quietly follows her into the corridor.

"Who wants me?" she demands abruptly. "Is it anyone about——"

She comes to a pause suddenly. Not for worlds could she, at this moment, finish the sentence; but Hialop—who is, by the way, the mistress's own maid—understands her.

"No, Miss Dunscombe," she replies readily. "It's nothing of that. It's Captain Hamilton."

The corridor is but dimly lighted, and it is, perhaps, well that it is so, for there is that in the ghastliness of the beautiful face which is turned upon the woman, as she gives this simple answer to a simple question, which, seen in the broad light of day, had surely appalled her.

"Captain Hamilton!" Margaret repeats, in a slow, scared voice. "And he wants to see me. Where have you taken him?"

"I understood Wilks, Miss Dunscombe, as he had shown him into the library," Hialop replies, unforgetful, even at this crisis, of what is due to her dignity.

The library is on the ground floor. The maid, following Margaret, with eyes that have in them some pity and more curiosity, sees her sweep down the wide staircase and across the pillared hall to the door of the room she has indicated. There, for the space of, perhaps, a second, she pauses, her hand upon it, and the watcher, watching, after all, with no special object to gain or to gratify, has the final satisfaction of seeing it open and close upon her.

"I wonder whether this 'll make any difference to those two," Hialop mutters to herself. "I don't believe as Miss Dunscombe would leave the mistress for all the husbands that ever were, now. But, oh my! Won't there be a kissing and a comforting in there!"

"A kissing and a comforting!" If Hialop could only see!

As the woman who has entered the room closes the door behind her, the man who is waiting for her in it, makes one quick step forward as though to greet her. But one, for there is that in the gesture with which she confronts him, in the raised head and uplifted hand, which bid him "Stand off!" even more plainly and intelligibly, if that be possible, than the words with which she enforces it.

"No nearer!" she says. "Not a step nearer, or I shall scream."

For a moment he stares at her in utter undisguised astonishment, then the expression of his face—scarcely less handsome and far more mobile than her own—changes to one of profound compassion.

"My poor girl!" he murmurs. "I don't wonder, and yet—— Is there nothing I can do for you? I should have been here before, but——"

"If you would only stop," Margaret breaks in abruptly. "If you would only wait until I have spoken, and not make it worse than it is. I don't ask you why you did not come before. I do not ask you that or anything. I don't wish you to account to me for your time. Other people may, but not I—I know!"

"You know!" the young man repeats in a perplexed voice. "But what?—what is it you know? This has been too much for you, Margaret; you are not well," he adds gravely.

"No," she replies steadily, her eyes fixed unflinchingly on his; "I am not well. I am ill and miserable, but I am not out of my senses. I could wish I were. With all my heart I could wish it, Arthur Hamilton. I tell you I know. And you could come to this house—to the house where he is lying dead—come to me—me who loved you, and believed in you, and trusted you—with a lie upon your lips, and blood upon your hands!"

The young man falls back a few paces, pale and horrorstruck.

"Good Heaven!" he mutters. "She is out of her mind!"

She is looking at him with an agony which does indeed—so acute is it—approach frenzy, expressed in every lineament of her countenance.

"If only now, after all, in spite of it all, you had been honest with me—if only you did not drive me to despise you, as well as to shrink from you!" she cries. "And I told you I knew—I never tried to deceive you. But you are too false

yourself to believe me. Arthur Hamilton," with a sudden complete change of her voice and manner, and speaking with a calm impressiveness which had it something judicial, "you are the murderer of my brother-in-law, Stephen Ellerton, and I hold here in my hand the proof of it."

Her hand is in the bosom of her dress, and she draws from it and holds out towards him a glove. It is a light, tan-coloured glove, but it is stained with something that has made it stiff and sticky—something at the mere sight of which the young man feels himself turn pale and sick, as a girl might do.

"It was picked up close to where he was found lying," she says quietly; "and they thought it was his, for his left hand was ungloved, but it is not a left-hand glove, and it is not his glove at all, but yours. It was I who put on the white button in place of the metal one, and put it on with the blue silk that was in my needle at the time, only a day or two ago."

He takes the glove from her mechanically, as it seems, and examines it. It has been mended as she says, and he looks up from his scrutiny of it with utter bewilderment.

"It is mine," he says simply. "How it got there Heaven only knows—I don't!"

"Hush!" she exclaims harshly. "Why should you perjure yourself to no purpose? Have you forgotten, or do you think I have forgotten, the purpose that was in your mind when you left me the other night. You would make him listen to you. You would find your opportunity. Why should you dissemble with me? I shall never betray you. If it would give my Lucy her husband back again—if it would do anybody any good—it would be another thing. But you are safe for me; you might feel that, and give me, at any rate, the poor comfort of knowing that you did not mean murder; that it was in the heat of the moment the blow was struck; that you did not lie in ambush."

"Margaret, you are dreaming!" he cries distractedly. "You don't know what you are saying—of what you are accusing me!"

"You will not tell me!" she says, letting his words pass her as though they were the wind.

"There is nothing to tell you, save that your sorrow has driven you, on this one

point, out of your mind," he replies, with a firmness he has not hitherto exhibited.

"It might be a dangerous mania, as far as you are concerned," she observes coldly. "What do you suppose they would say to that at the inquest to-morrow?"

"Much that the woman to whom I am engaged to be married, and whom I vainly imagined loved me, is saying to-night, I suppose. You can produce it," he adds bitterly, as he throws it down on the table between them. "You are welcome to your proof."

She takes it deliberately up, and throws it on the fire.

"Go!" she says, then, turning her pale face upon him for the last time; "and if you would not have me shrink from you and despise you more than I do now even, never let me see you or hear of you again."

"Margaret!" he exclaims; "I tell you you are out of your mind!"

But his words, if they reach her at all, only do so as she passes out of the room and out of his presence, leaving him to make his exit as best he may from the house he has been so distinctly forbidden to re-enter.

For a moment he feels bitterly wrathful and indignant, but to do him justice, it is only for a moment. All his resentment is swallowed up, as it were, in his pity and his sorrow.

"What will become of them all," he murmurs, "if the only person in the house who has a head on her shoulders loses it like this?"

Somehow the danger to himself, which may be involved in this madness, is the last thing to suggest itself to him. The whole idea is so absurd, that it fails to trouble him. Nobody in his or her senses could dream of crime, and such crime, in connection with him. And Margaret will recover herself! She will yet eat her words, with shame and sorrow, should she ever be able to believe it of herself that she could have uttered them.

Shall he leave any words for her to that effect or not?

He hesitates for a moment, then decides that in her present state of mind, the better and kinder course is to leave her at peace to recover herself, and so, without even so far calling attention to his presence in the house as to summon the sad-faced butler to see him out of it, quietly—and, as it might seem, secretly—lets himself out into the night.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXVIII. A TRUE LOVER.

CLARENCE LITTON, though not himself renowned for unselfishness, thought that his brother was doing a selfish and unreasonable, as well as an absurd thing, in asking Theo to go out to him. He was one of those practical men who know everything; he knew all the difficulties in the way, all the hardships that Theo would have to go through; he knew that, if she carried out her romantic plan of starting off at once, she would arrive at the very worst time of year; and he was angry with Gerald for not considering these things. He talked to Theo as much as he dared, and strongly advised her at least to wait a few months; but he soon saw that he might as well talk to the wind that was shaking the lilac-bushes, and after that he said no more. He shrugged his shoulders, and reflected that he was not responsible for the scrapes into which these foolish creatures would no doubt run themselves. If he had not liked and admired Theo, he would not even have troubled himself, as he did, to write a scolding to Gerald. This would be much too late to do any good, but was a little salve to his conscience, for he knew it was originally his fault that Gerald had gone to Africa at all.

Even Ada, who thought Gerald perfect, was surprised that he should have asked Theo to go out to him. She could not understand the violent reaction which had almost driven the young fellow out of his senses, when, after a journey more fatiguing than anything he had ever gone through in his life, he found Theo's letter waiting

passed him and arrived a few days before. Something in her letter, something she had said about separation, made him think that she would come if he asked her. He had come out with the notion that he could never live in England again. Then, if they still belonged to each other, if she cared for him in spite of the disgrace, what was the use of waiting? Life here without her had seemed terribly hopeless before; it seemed impossible now. He had seen enough already, among the men he had met—enough of their temptations and their wrecked lives—to make him dread and doubt the future, unless she would come and be his guardian-angel.

"I can't live without her," Gerald argued; "and if she cares for me as much as I do for her, she will come."

And so he did that selfish thing, though he hated the country, and the people, and all the surroundings, and knew that they must be more repulsive to her than to him—he told her that he would not wait for an answer to his letter, but would go down to Cape Town and meet the first mail-steamer that left England after she received it—"Just on the chance of your coming to me, my darling."

So that Theo had only one week to make up her mind, and get her outfit, and say good-bye to everything she cared for in England, for her departure was to be as sudden as Gerald's own.

Making up her mind was not a long affair, for she did that while she read his letter.

Then she turned to Clarence Litton and said very sweetly:

"I shall have a great many things to do. Will you help me?"

"With pleasure," said Clarence. "I wish I could escort you out. But of course

"I don't want her to go, poor thing, but she says she will," said Theo.

Combe had absolutely refused to be left behind, and as it was impossible to go alone, Theo had consented to take her.

In that week there was no time to think, or talk, or do anything but prepare for that long journey with such a strange end to it.

Clarence was very uneasy, for he thought that this girl did not the least understand what she was doing, but he made no more remonstrances, and devoted himself to her service with all the wit and experience he had—and these were not small. He took her passage in the steamer, going on board himself to arrange everything for her; he thought of everything that she and Combe could possibly want on the voyage, and made Theo laugh by the lists of things he insisted on ordering.

Theo herself was thinking a great deal of Ada, and very little of her own wants. After she had paid a visit to her bankers, and asked them, much to their surprise, to transfer all her money to a bank at Kimberley, she became quite unpractical as regarded herself.

Clarence Litton and Combe—a strange pair of workers—arranged all the luggage as they thought best, and Clarence proposed to himself, though not yet to her, to take her down to Southampton and see her off.

The packet sailed from Southampton on Thursday. The weather was very hot, and Ada, who had been quite miserable since Gerald's letter came, and had shared with Combe all sorts of sad forebodings, which she hid from Theo, had cried herself on Tuesday into a helpless headache. It was their last day together, for Theo was going to take her to Mrs. Keene's on Wednesday, and leave her there, before she went down to Southampton.

The child lay on the sofa in the hot, oppressive afternoon, her face buried in the cushions, with a sob breaking out sometimes. Theo, who had tried in vain to comfort her, was now writing a letter to Lady Redcliff; she had written her other letters the day before—one to Nell, one to Hugh. This time last year they had been her nearest and dearest, and she had been fretting her life away with her grandmother in the square. Now she had written to them both to tell them how they had really lost her—a short, gentle answer to that letter of Nell's which had hurt her so, a still shorter note to Hugh, just tell-

ing him what she was going to do, without any allusion of any kind to the past, and adding at the end, with all her old faith in Hugh: "Will you take care of Wool? I am leaving him with these people for the present. Tell him not to forget me."

Theo had not written to her grandmother; they had had no communication since they parted at Locarno; but that Tuesday morning she had gone alone to the square, and asked a strange manservant if Lady Redcliff would see her. The answer was real pain. No, Lady Redcliff could not see Miss Meynell. The man looked curiously at her, as she turned away with her air of fine scorn; but Theo's heart felt cold and heavy, in spite of her stately looks, and she had spent half the afternoon in composing a letter to her grandmother.

She was very sad and tired that afternoon; the week of hurry and intense excitement was telling upon her. Ada's grief weighed down her spirits; the world was noisy, and dusty, and intensely hot; the rooms were in a state of dismal untidiness after her packing and Ada's. She sat at the table, bending and frowning over her letter; she had pushed her long white fingers through her hair, pressing it back from her forehead, the blue veins on which showed how tired she was. There were dark stains under her eyes, her face was thinner than it used to be; she was carelessly dressed, for in the wild hurry of that week Combe had had no time to bestow on her mistress.

The fat little landlady opened the door, announcing "Captain North," and this was how Hugh saw his beautiful cousin. That day, in the winter, how different she had looked; soft, calm, blooming, noble, when her cruel hardness had crushed all his hopes.

She started violently, and almost screamed, when she heard his name. Ada sprang up from the sofa, and with red eyes and cheeks flew out of the room; and Hugh stood still in the midst of all the confusion, in a sort of dismay, facing Theo, while the landlady shut the door behind him.

"Shall I go away?" he said in a low voice, as he and Theo looked at each other. "I don't want to bore you, Theo."

She stood for a moment quite still without answering him, only looking at him, and seeing and feeling his sadness, his perfect constancy.

"Oh, Hugh!" she said at last, breathlessly, for all the old days were coming back, the happy years long vanished, when she was a girl, and he was her dear elder brother, always patient, and strong, and kind. He was different from everybody else, dear Hugh; his friendship was worth more, almost, than anything in the world; and for the moment Theo could forget how he had spoilt it, and was so glad, so sorry, to see him again, that she hid her face in her hands, forgetting all her dignity, and sobbed like a child.

"Don't, my dear!" said Hugh under his breath.

He made a quick step forward, standing near her at the end of the table; she had sat down again, still hiding her face, and struggling to control herself.

Hugh was very white, and it is possible that there were tears in his eyes too, as he stood there looking at her.

"I never meant to distress you like this," he said, as she became a little calmer. "What is it?—what is troubling you? I only want to be of use to you, if you will let me, Theo. I know you have made up your mind."

His low, grave tones were very soothing. Theo held out one hand to him, still hiding her eyes with the other. He took it after an instant's hesitation, pressed it gently, and let it go. Then he walked across to the window, and stood there silently for three or four minutes, till at last she spoke to him.

"Come here—come and sit down," she said. "It is very kind of you."

Hugh took a chair, and sat down a little way from her. He looked pale and quiet, his fair moustache and his heavy eyelids drooping; the perfection of his dress was in odd contrast with all that surrounded him; he looked down at his hat and stick, and played with them a little.

Whatever his intentions might have been, this was a moment that tried the honesty of them, but if there was any struggle in his mind, nobody could see it.

"I thought you might like me to take Wool back to-day," he said. "In that case he won't suffer any loneliness, though I don't know how he is to understand what has happened, poor old boy! But you are quite right not to think of taking him with you. He would be a bore; besides which, the climate would probably kill him."

"I never thought of it," said Theo.

"Thank you very much."

miserable. If Hugh had been reproachful, or had shown any violent feeling in any way, she could have been proud, and scornful, and angry. As it was, he seemed to be heaping coals of fire on her head. After the first agitation at seeing him, she began to wish that he had not come; but presently she withdrew that wish, for with every moment it became easier to talk to him. He was so wonderfully considerate and calm; he began asking a few little, insignificant questions about her plans, the time she meant to leave London, the time the ship sailed, and then he said, looking rather more intently at his hat:

"If you don't mind, I should be very glad if you would let me see you off, unless you have made some other arrangement."

"Thank you—oh no; I shall be very glad," said Theo gently. "Combe is going with me, you know."

Hugh nodded.

"Does Lady Redcliff—" he began.

"Grandmamma is very angry with me; she won't see me," said Theo, her voice trembling a little. "I was writing to her when you came in."

"Well—" said Hugh; and then, after a pause, he went on: "Do you know that you are going out at the worst time of year? The spring out there is most unhealthy."

"Yes, I have been told so," she answered, "but I don't think I am a feverish person."

"I should be rather doubtful about that," said Hugh. "I hope you will take every precaution. Have you been led to think that Kimberley is a nice place?"

"I have not heard much about it. No, I suppose not."

"I have known men who have been there," said Hugh gloomily, "and they agreed in describing it as everything that is horrible."

"I hope it is not so bad as that," said Theo. "Don't frighten me, and don't bother yourself about me, Hugh. Don't you know that I have a great deal of strength in reserve, and that all my life I have longed for some real adventures? Travelling in that country must really be great fun. Sleeping out of doors, for instance, and waking up to see the stars shining."

"You!" he said with an almost angry emphasis; but then he looked up, and met a smile which seemed to bring all the old times back again.

Theo was much more like herself now; the high spirit of her girlhood had come

back suddenly, and was lighting up her pale face. Hugh gave a quick sigh, and looked down again.

"You must come out some day and spend your leave with us," she said, and then she knew she was cruel.

He shook his head.

"You are most kind," he said, "but I like civilisation." Then he added: "All your relations have been in a dreadful state of mind for months, including myself, Theo."

"I am glad one of them has come to wish me good-bye," she said. "Yes, John told me, one day when he was here, that I must choose between them—and Nell agrees with him, and I thought you did too."

"John is an ass—I mean he is not my superior officer," said Hugh hastily. "As for me, I can't afford to lose you altogether, though I did think, not long ago, that I wished never to see you again. And so now I want to ask you a great favour, Theo. Will you grant it?"

"I will," said Theo.

Her ready answer pleased him very much; this trust in him was some slight reward for the long, hard battle in which he had come off conqueror.

"Thank you, my dear," he said in his gravest manner. "I want you to forget last winter, and to let everything be now as if that had never been."

"Very well, Hugh; thank you, I will," she answered very softly, and after a pause she went on: "I wish I had written to you sooner."

"So do I," said Hugh, "for I might have done a great many things for you, and I am afraid you have tired yourself dreadfully—a bad preparation for your start. Now tell me a little more about your arrangements."

There he stayed for hours, and Theo, keeping her word to him, and doing what he wished without any afterthought, told him everything, and listened meekly to a great deal of good advice. Hugh behaved like a hero; he bore her mention of Clarence Litton with calm indifference, and when Clarence actually interrupted them by coming into the room, his manner to him was not absolutely crushing. Clarence went away at once to find Ada, and soon after this Hugh said that he must go.

He took both Theo's hands, and bent over her, and kissed her gently on the forehead, as he used to do when she was a girl.

"Do you remember something you

promised me," he said, "the evening before Helen was married?"

"Yes, I have thought of it," said Theo; "but there are promises one can't keep."

"Don't make any more of that kind," said Hugh. "Then I shall meet you to-morrow at Waterloo, and—in the meanwhile where is Mr. Wool?"

A CHAT ABOUT FOLK-LORE.

THERE are two reasons why folk-lore has many points of resemblance in countries widely separated from one another; first, "the transmission of the myth," as it is called, next the fact that man is man all the world over. Transmission has gone on far more widely than we might imagine. Old books, like Dunlop's *History of Fiction*, showed how Boccaccio and other Italians merely furbished up the folk-tales which had come in from Asia Minor, where, on their way westward, they were christened Milesian tales. But whence did they originally come? Æsop's fables, for instance, everybody knows, are attributed in their Hindoo form to the sage Pilpay. Shall we say, as the philologists do about the commonest words, that they were invented by the Aryas before their dispersion, so that, while the ancestors of the Greeks carried them westward, the Hindoo invaders of the Ganges valley carried them with them to the East? Possibly, but that would not account for their being found, with strangely little alteration, among Kalmucks and such non-Aryan folk.

The strangest case of "transmission" I remember is that of the Milesian tale, which in Petronius is entitled *The Ephesian Matron*. It is not an edifying story—few of these tales are—but it was immensely popular in Europe. Chaucer laid hold of it as well as Voltaire. One finds something like it in that mine of folk-lore, Campbell's *Tales of the West Highlands*. But the strangest thing is, that the same story, with just the local colour changed, is found in China, in a collection of romances, some of which were translated long ago by the Jesuit fathers, Eutrecolles and Du Halde. M. Stanislas Julien and M. Abel Rémusat republished them some forty years ago; and now this *Matron of the land of Soung* has been printed, with fac-similes of the Chinese illustrations, in that dainty way in which no one can come up to the French when they take the trouble to do a book well. All the versions

of the tale are to the discredit of widows. In the Chinese story, the loving wife vows to her sick husband that she will never marry again. She was specially disgusted at a story which he had brought home from his travels, of a widow, young and beautiful, whom he found fanning her husband's newly-plastered tomb because she had promised him not to marry again, at any rate until the plaster on his tomb should be dry. Such a creature, she avers, is a disgrace to her sex; and she breaks up the fan with which her husband had assisted in the drying process, and which the too-easily consoled widow had given him as a memento. The sick man, Tchouang-tsen, dies, and is put into a coffin, which, according to custom, is to stand in the hall during the hundred days of mourning. But, just when the funeral party has broken up, a very handsome, richly-dressed young graduate comes up, explains that he was coming to be Tchouang's disciple for a year, and begs leave to pray at the coffin, and to offer his respects to the widow. She falls in love with him, and, as it is a quiet country place, thinks she may, without scandal, arrange a marriage at once. But in the midst of the feast the young bridegroom falls into convulsions, from which his old servant says he can only be saved by taking in hot wine the brain of a man who has been less than forty days dead. The widow runs at once for the wood-axe, splits open her husband's coffin, and is startled by seeing him stand up and ask what's the matter. "I thought I heard you make a noise, and I came to set you free," says she. But the deception can only last a moment; there are the good things half eaten, there is the graduate making off with his serving-man. So poor Tchouang drinks up the hot wine, writes his wife a set of verses which show her that he sees through it all, and while she, after the Chinese fashion, goes away and hangs herself, he breaks up all the crockery, tears the furniture to pieces, behaves otherwise like a Chinaman in a passion, sets the house on fire, and goes off to find the sage Lao-tsen, under whom he becomes a celebrated philosopher. There is this difference between the Chinese and all the other versions—that infidelity gets punished, and that the widow, however indecent her haste, still keeps to what she deems propriety. People are more modest in China than they were at Ephesus, or in mediæval Italy, or in the Europe of the *Fabliaux*.

Well, that is one instance of a transmitted story. How did it get to China?

We are apt to underrate the powers, and limit the range, of the professional storyteller. He has been at work from time immemorial; and whenever he hears a good story he passes it on and on, just as the tricks of jugglers are passed on, so that you see the same thing done in a quiet court in the east of London that your brother in India has looked on at by torch-light at some Raja's garden-party. Where any particular story first began, who can tell? It was made up by somebody who did not write it down and publish as Scott did *Waverley*, but told it in the bazaar, and there somebody else listened, and then and there carried off some sort of a version of it; perhaps all the way from Candahar to Bokhara. Thence it goes still farther, and by-and-by comes back westward, in more or less wholly new dress. We remember how large a Chinese element there is in the *Arabian Nights*, and the process is always going on.

When a bit of folk-lore, just like the Aryan, crops out among the Zulus or Dyaks, the course is not quite so plain. There are no great caravan-roads, like that along which silk had moved westward long before Virgil's time, for "the myth" to be transmitted along. But still it may be handed on, via Egypt and Kordofan, into Central Africa, and thence southward; for among story-tellers everywhere, there is a freemasonry which is sure to lead to an interchange of one another's wares. And between stories and folk-lore there is no hard and fast line; one runs into the other; so that though, no doubt, there is in every people a mass of self-evolved tales, these are seldom easy to distinguish. They tell us that "cat's-cradle" is popular in most of the Polynesian groups. Is that transmitted, or specially invented? It is the same with the yet more widely-spread game of "How many fingers do I hold up?" The controversy about originality in these matters reminds one of that about creation. Did foxes, for instance, or deer, or any other widely-diffused creatures, come into being independently in all or most of the countries in which they are now found; or, was each kind produced in some one centre, and thence distributed?

Another way in which myths have grown up, need only just be mentioned. Missionaries are answerable for a good many of them. Somebody makes his way

far into the depths of heathendom, as the Nestorian Christians did into the heart of China, leaving crosses on old gateways to astonish the traveller of to-day who thought no Christian had ever been so far till he came. The name and memory of the old preacher perish, but some distorted notion of his doctrine has laid hold of the popular mind; and there is the foundation of a myth. Such myths grow up very quickly. In Polynesia one finds them, though known missionary effort among those islands dates but from yesterday. In South Africa there are unmistakable traces of it, and yet more in America. The whole legend of Hiawatha bears signs of having been touched up with Christian colours. In The Field of Bones, one of the tales collected in Bengal at the mouths of old village women by a native clergyman, Lal Bechari Day, there is a distinct reminder of the well-known chapter in Isaiah—only a reminder, for the story is full of the giant cannibals, Rakshasis, who abound in most Hindoo stories. We remember how early among the hill-tribes Nicholson became deified; the villagers were “doing poojah” (worship) to his picture under the name of Nikkul Seyn; and so, among the Makololo, the peacemaking of Livingstone has already become a legend.

Here is something that is found in Gorman and Campbell, and all the European collections. A man and his wife eat enchanted meat, after which the woman bears a son, Rombao, who comes into the world ready equipped with gun and spear and dog. By-and-by he meets a whale, and wants to drink. “Why should you drink my water?” says the whale. “Because I am thirsty.” “Pay me a price for it.” “No; let us come and fight.” They fight, the whale is killed, and Rombao cuts out his tongue and salts it. Now the country round was dry, and a great chief gave up his daughter to buy water from the whale. But three days had passed, and the wind came out as a sign that the girl was dead. So the chief sent his captain and some soldiers, and said: “Go and see if the whale has eaten my child.” The captain went and found the whale was dead. Then he said to the soldiers: “Come, let us fire guns for two days, and go to the village and tell that it was I who killed the whale. Then the chief will give me his daughter to wife, and I will pay you with much goods.” So they fired guns, and went back and told

the chief: “The captain has killed the whale.” “Very well,” said the chief, “then I will give him my daughter to wife.” When the marriage-day came, Rombao went to the village, and found all the people gathered together. The girl was speechless, and her mother said: “Do you wish that captain to marry you?” She did not answer, but went on weeping. Her father said: “But she will marry that captain.” Rombao asked: “Why is the captain going to marry her?” They said: “Because he has killed the whale.” “But where’s the whale’s tongue?” asked Rombao. “Yes, we want to see the tongue!” shouted they all. So the captain sent his men to bring its tongue, and they looked, and the tongue was wanting. So they came back, and said: “The whale has not a tongue; it is rotten.” “That is false,” replied Rombao. “That captain did not kill the whale; it was I. Wait now, and I will go fetch his tongue. So he brought the tongue to the chief, and the chief said: “Very well; do you take my daughter to be your wife.” Then the chief took much goods and gave to Rombao. Then he killed the captain, and his men likewise.

Now will any one venture to say how much of this is home-grown, and how much is a faint memory of Perseus and Andromeda, itself “transmitted” to Greece from the Syrian seaboard, dovetailed on to a story which in Campbell is called The Sea-Maiden, and in Dasent’s Norse Tales appears as Short-shanks? It is not from yesterday that a connection dates between the Malabar Coast and Zanzibar. Since our cruisers have been dhow-catching and carrying the rescued captives over to Bombay, there is in that city quite a colony of “sidi-boys.” You can find them on the P. and O. steamers as stokers. And they, of course, carry with them shreds and patches of Hindoo lore when they go back. And, in like manner, Rombao may have been “transmitted” across sea hundreds of years ago; or it may have gone round by way of Egypt, or by Abyssinia, whither has often flowed a stream of Arab colonisation, and of which the folk-lore is as yet unexplored. Anyhow it seems like a transmitted tale; whereas the following, found in different forms in almost every country in the world, is more like a case of home-grown work. A man lived by setting traps; and night after night a crocodile came and ate the bait. So, at last, the man, being

grieved, set the trap in another place, and put nothing in. Thereupon the crocodile, searching and finding nothing, went into the trap and was caught. When the man came in the morning, he was going to spear the crocodile, but it said: "Let me out, and I will go home and pay you for what I have stolen." He let it out, and it leapt on his back, sticking its claws into his body, and saying: "Carry me to my home." A hare saw them going through the water and called out: "Man, where are you off to?" "I am carrying this chief to his home, that he may pay me for my goods." "I do not hear you," replied the hare; and, when the man said it over again, he cried: "I do not hear you. Are you making a fool of me? Come near; come near." "Listen, O chief!" said the man. "The hare says we must go back a little." So they came to the bank, and the man repeated the same words. "Yes, that is right," said the hare; "but first come off his back there." Then the hare asked: "Man, how did you set your trap? Let me see it." So the man set it. "Ah, chief, pray how did you get in?" was the hare's next question. "I passed here, I passed there, and I went——" Good! there was the crocodile caught. "Now, O man! kill that vermin," said the hare. "It wanted to eat you." So the crocodile was killed; and one is reminded of the way in which the imp is got into the bottle again, and of other tales in our own nurseries and in learned collections.

The hare in these East African tales answers to Uncle Remus's Brer Rabbit. When hare and hyena have married two girls, who, instead of the customary betrothal-gift of calico, ask for lion, leopard, and python skins, the former answers the latter's objection that "the lion is terrible," with the bold assurance, "I will try to kill a lion, that my wife may rejoice and say 'my husband is strong.'" So he takes salt and bangles, and putting the latter on his legs, comes to the lions' village. The chief lion takes him for a woman and says: "You are my wife." But he complains: "Your chief wife abuses me." So the lion killed her and her children. "Take off their skins," said the hare, and he and the lion were left alone. "My husband, your eyes frighten me." "Take them out," said the eager lion. The hare put out the lion's eyes, killed and skinned him; salted and hid the skins, and went to the leopards' village. Here he did the same thing, and,

moreover, before he would allow the leopard to come near him, he said: "My husband, I want python's skins," and the leopard went and got them for him. So now, carrying his booty, he met the hyena. "Ugwi! how have you slain these skins?" asked he. "I slew them with my bag of salt," was the reply. The hyena went to get his skins, and began to attack a lion. The lions were angry and asked: "Is it war that you want, O hyena?"—and they killed him. And the hare went for his wife, and she rejoiced and said: "My husband is clever;" and the hare stayed at that village and became a great chief.

All who can get hold of it should read Rev. Duff Macdonald's *Africana*, each volume of which ends with a collection of tales, of which I have selected a sample. Mr. Macdonald was at Blantyre, the mission which got into the newspapers on account of a native thief being flogged. "Thieving must be checked," judged Mr. Macdonald. It was about time, seeing that a white man, superintending the making of a road, woke one morning to find his wardrobe limited to what he had gone to sleep in. So the thief got nine hundred lashes—very gentle ones, the native law being "death to the thief." However, our business is not with the way in which the Blantyre mission was carried on. Mr. Macdonald as a folk-lorist is delightful. In "the dead chief and his younger brother" he reminds us of Souvestre's Breton legends. The younger brother has all the dead man's wives, and, indeed, most of his tribe, carried off by a neighbouring king. He goes to his brother's grave to consult him, as King Latinus does in Virgil, as chieftains do in the old Gaelic tales. His brother gives him four small bags, and explains their use, and bids him follow the plunderers. Magic obstacles are thrown in his way. First there is a large tree lying across the road; so he opens the first bag, and a wood-moth comes out and gnaws a passage. Next, the path is blocked by a vast rock; so out of the second bag comes a manis, and digs a subway. Then there is a broad river, across which a spider from the third bag spins a thread. At night he sits down near the king's village, and opens the last bag, out of which comes a rat that creeps into the king's basket, and when he takes off his eyes (spectacles) the rat carries them to the chief. At dawn the king says: "Let all assemble with their prisoners, that I may see them." But he

cannot see them, for "his eyes" are gone. And the chief shouts from across the stream: "Give me back my people. I also have captured in war. The eyes of the king have I carried off." So the king said, "Young men, give him up his people," and they were returned.

Brer rabbit is as helpful to man as the hare is in that crocodile story. When the lion wants to kill the hunter for having slain his bucks, rabbit expostulates, and says: "I can show you better meat not far away." So he leads him to a pitfall where lived a serpent, and persuades him to go in; and when he is in, he calls the man, and bids him light a fire at the pit's mouth, and kill the lion.

If the lion is a fool, the elephant is no wiser. He and rabbit strike up a friendship, and agree to sow their garden. "Yes, and let us first roast our seeds," said rabbit. The stupid elephant roasted his, but rabbit only roasted a very few; so that, when the rains came, the elephant's garden was bare, while rabbit's was full of pumpkins. Then said the elephant, "My friend has deceived me," and he took to stealing rabbit's pumpkins by night. "I wonder who steals my pumpkins," said rabbit. "I don't know," said the elephant. So rabbit made a drum, and went with it secretly inside a pumpkin. The elephant came as before, and ate that pumpkin among the rest, and there was the rabbit drumming away in his stomach. So the elephant died, and people said, "Meat has died for us here." And when they opened the body they found rabbit and his drum, and said: "Yes; no wonder the elephant died."

Here is another case of the helpful hare. A man shot a buffalo. Cutting off the hind-legs, he left it till to-morrow, and in the night a hyena came and ate its way in, and got caught in its ribs. When the man came, he begged hard, and said: "Come to my cave, and I'll pay you." So the man went, and hyena showed him his wife big with young, and said: "Come again at the moon's end, and I will give you three children because of your meat." So the hunter consented. But the hyena went to a lion, and said: "Chief, come and live in this cave, and at the moon's end you shall have a hairless animal." "Do you mean a man?" said the lion. "I mean a man." So the lion came and waited; and at the set time the man came, and was startled to see lion's feet. However, being strong in heart, he went in; but when he saw the

lion and his wife he wanted to go back. "Why do you go back, my meat?" said the lion. "I am not your meat," replied the man; "but you ate my meat, and told me to come for pay at the moon's end." "No, I did not eat your meat; it was the hyena; and he told me you would come." While they were quarrelling, the hare came up, and said: "Chief, leave off your dispute. O lion, thy elder brother sent me to tell you not to eat the man." "Get away," said the lion. But the hare pulled out some honey and some snuff, and the lion, acting just as a native king would if eatables appeared in the midst of the most exciting law-case, asked for snuff, and got some, and then wanted honey. The hare gave him a taste, and he wanted more. "You must first let me tie your tails together." Then the lion said to his wife: "Listen, wife! Do you want to eat sweets?" "Yes." So their tails were tied together, and then the hare took away the man, and, laughing at the lion when he asked for the sweets, threw a stone into the cave, and shut the lions in.

Kindness to animals is as sure of a reward as in the old German tales. A python is overtaken by a bush-fire; a man comes by with an axe in his hand. "O chief, hoe to save me!" said the beast. "If I hoed to save you, you would devour me." "No, I would not." So the man hoed; and by-and-by the python becomes a young lad, and gets the man to carry him on his back through a hole in the mountain into Python Town. Here he brews beer (the plan for cementing friendship), and they sit and drink and drink. At last the man says, "I go home now;" and the python gives him four bales of calico and a bottle which, if pointed towards his enemies, will make them all dead men. Once he leaves his bottle in the hut, and the enemies take it, and capture him; but (as in the case of the king's eyes) a rat gets it back for him, and just when they are bringing him out for execution, he points it at them, and they are all dead and gone, and he and the rat divide their land and goods.

Ridicule comes out in many of the stories as a powerful engine in woman's hands. A man shows he cannot eat bran-porridge while he is tasting some. In comes his wife, and he puts it in his hat, saying, "My wife will laugh at me for changing my ways;" and when it trickles down, he appeals to her: "Wife, do not tell people that I was seen with bran-

porridge on my head, and I will pay you with goods." So she brews beer, and gathers the neighbours for a dance, and the two are good friends again.

A deadly bottle comes in in another story, which reminds us of many in Grimm and elsewhere. The girl who gives pleasant answers to the leopard and other beasts, gets helped from one to the other, and finally recovers her child. Her companions, who answer crossly, "We don't want to be questioned by you," get no information; and at last God (Mlungu) kills them with a bottle of lightning. Mlungu, by the way, is only half friends with man, though when the sun, whom He had made, "gave way to fierceness," he took rain, and cooled down the sun. According to one account, rain was not His gift. "People who died became God, and they said: 'Come, let us give our children rain.' Others refused, and said: 'Come, let us make pots and fill with water.' And the others said: 'Let us break a pot; let us give our children rain.'" But the usual idea is that when men die, Mlungu takes men to heaven that they may be His slaves, because they ate His people (the beasts) here below. For in the beginning, there were no men, but only God and beasts. And a chameleon set his fish-trap in the river, and day by day he found fishes even when the otter came and ate them. And one day, very early, he found a man and woman in his trap. So he said: "To-day things unknown have entered my trap. I wonder if I ought to take them?" He did take them, and carried them to Mlungu, who then lived here, before He had gone away to heaven. "Master," said he, "see what I have brought to-day." "Set them down," said Mlungu, "and they will grow." So they grew, the man and the woman; and Mlungu said, "Wait till I call my people," and He went, calling all the beasts of the earth and all the birds. And when they were assembled, He said: "We have called you for these strange beings that chameleon found in his trap." All the beasts said: "We have heard" (i.e. they had not a word to say). Next day they saw a wonder—these new creatures making fire with a fire-stick. Then they killed a buffalo and made roast; and so they went on with all the beasts. Then Mlungu said: "Chameleon, I was told you were bringing in puzzling creatures among us. See now my people are being punished. How shall I act?" So the chameleon ran

up a tree; and Mlungu said, "I cannot climb a tree," so he went off to call the spider; and the spider went on high and returned again, and said: "You, now, Mlungu, go on high." Mlungu then went with the spider on high; and He said: "When these new creatures die let them come on high here."

But I shall leave no room for the Hindoo stories which I meant to contrast with these East African ones. Here is my last from Mr. Macdonald, and it is notable because its phrase, "Death and sleep are one word, they are of one family," is exactly that of Homer: "At first people did not die, and they lived without sleep. And there came a woman that could not walk, and she said, 'Sleep;' and two slept, and one of them she caught by the nostrils. Then she cried, 'Arise,' but the one she had caught could not move. So she said: 'I am sorry; I have done wrong. He cannot breathe. Now mourn for him.'" So the people mourned three days; and then they said, "Dig a grave," and they buried him. The woman that could not walk had done mischief.

Of the Hindoo legends, the most striking feature is their wildness. Is it a protest against the dull monotony of life in India? Or is life less monotonous to the native than to the European? Lal Behari's tales, anyhow, are wilder than the wildest bits of the Arabian Nights. A young man puts an egg of the toontoona bird into a cupboard, and out of it comes a babe that grows into the loveliest girl the world ever saw. The mannik stone in some snakes' heads is worth the wealth of seven kings. In a certain city an elephant is kingmaker; but the king of his choice only reigns a day, for out of the queen's mouth comes a thread-like snake which alays him in the bride-chamber. A long-lost son, who had fallen in love with his mother, and has mounted the cow-house roof that he may break in and carry her off, happily hears his life's story from two calves that are quietly discussing him below. Ghosts haunt peepul-trees, and are as tricky as mediums at a séance. A wife, going out of doors on a dark night, accidentally knocks up against a Sankchinni, white lady ghost, that sat on a low branch. The revengeful creature at once took her by the throat, thrust her into a hole in the tree, and went in, taking her shape so completely that the mother-in-law, that universal inmate of the Hindoo hut, was deceived. The only difference

was that, whereas the wife had been weak and languid, the ghost was brisk and active. "She has turned over a new leaf; so much the better," said the mother-in-law, when the errands and the cooking were done in next to no time. But one day the old woman caught sight of the ghost fetching something from the next room ghost fashion, by stretching out a long arm—for ghosts can stretch their limbs a great way, though not so far as Rakshasis can. She said nothing, but told her son; and they watched, and before long they saw the kitchen hearth ablaze, though they knew there was no fire in the house. Looking through a chink, they saw that the wife had thrust her foot into the oven, and that it was burning like a bit of wood. "She's a ghost," they whispered, so they went for the Ojha, who tested her by burning turmeric under her nose. She proved her ghostship by screaming, and was then beaten with slippers till she confessed, and showed where the real wife was, and was again beaten till she promised never to do the family any further harm. The poor wife must have been a bad bargain after the active ghost, for she was almost dead, and very slowly got back to her usual weak health.

If you are a Brahmin, the best ghost to have to do with is that of a Brahmadaitya—a Brahmin who dies unmarried. A poor Brahmin undertook, like "Mary, the maid of the inn," to fetch a branch at midnight from a ghost-haunted tree just outside the village. Rash men had tried, but their necks had been wrung. However, the Zumidar's offer of one hundred bighas of freehold land was too strong a temptation for the starving man. So he went; but at one rope's distance from the haunted tree his heart misgave him, and he stopped under a vakula-tree, in which lodged a Brahmadaitya. The "blessed ghost," hearing of his trouble, at once compelled the other ghosts to act like slaves of the lamp. They finished cutting the bough, for putting knife to which they were just going to tear the Brahmin in pieces. And when the land was given they reaped his harvests, and brought him flour and ghee, and sugar, and curds, etc., enough to feast a thousand brother Brahmins. And as no good deed to a Brahmin is ever done in vain, the Brahmadaitya was at once freed from his ghostly life, and taken to heaven in a fire-chariot.

While reading these tales, one seems to get on intimate terms with these

Hindoo villagers, where the stepmother hates her step-sons as, she did in old Greece; where the wife is as dutiful and self-devoting as Alcestis herself; where the duty to guests is as strongly felt as in Admetus's household. One thing is worth noting, the Rakshasis—"raw-eaters," supposed to be some dim remembrance of an aboriginal cannibal race—are so terrible and destructive as to eat up whole cities, and even when, from some whim, one of them has taken a human husband, she is so afflicted with perpetual hunger as to be obliged to get up at night and devour all the meat in the larder. Yet the cross between man and Rakshasi is splendid, physically and morally. The son of one of these marriages is "like a god," and when his mother kills and eats his father and his human wife, he rescues his half-brother though he has to slay his mother in so doing. These "raw-eaters" are just like our giants in their keen scent of mortals who come within their reach.

"Hye mye khye,
A human being I smell!"

is their cry. They are, too, like the "giant who had no heart in his body," and who appears under various forms in so many European stories. A king's daughter, the survivor of a whole city, whom an old ogress took a liking to and spared, worms her secret out of her as soon as the arrival of the predestined prince has set her wits working. She falls a crying; and when the Rakshasi asks why, she replies: "Mother, I weep because you are old, and when you die I shall surely be eaten by one of your fellows." "When I die! Why, foolish girl, we Rakshasis never die. We are not immortal, but no human being can find the secret on which our life depends. The life of all this clan that dwells here is in yonder tank. In the midst, in deep water, is a hollow glass pillar, at the top of which are two bees. Whoso brings up both at one breath, and kills them without shedding a drop of blood, will kill us all at one blow. If a drop of blood touches the ground a thousand more of us will start to life immediately." That is one striking resemblance to Western tales that I have noticed in Lal Bechari's budget. Here is one more: If the magic pot (handi), out of which issues a hundred demons, is turned up and covered, the demons straightway disappear. For this, there is a well-known Western parallel. And *The Adventures of Two Thieves* have a smack of the Norse *Mather Thief*, itself based on the old

Egyptian story, told by Herodotus, of the brothers who robbed the treasure in the pyramid. The Hindoo story, however, is much more elaborately worked out. One want alike in Hindoo and African legends, is the fairies; and these old friends reappear strangely enough in Maori land. The Maoris say they are as grasshoppers for multitude, and just like the English to look at, fair, with freckled skins and red-brown hair. As among the old Gaels, men woo and win them to wife occasionally, and Maori children are carried of and changelings put in their place. They fish by night, sing at their fishing—men have even learnt verses of their songs. So from one end of the earth to the other we have similar ideas about the supernatural, expressing themselves in strangely similar folk-lore.

THE ENGLISH IN CAIRO.

(NOTES OF A PRIVATE SOLDIER.)

IT may be said that the sequel to the successful invasion of a country, usually, in the first place, takes the form of the occupation of its capital city by the victorious forces of the invaders. Under circumstances of this kind, the writer found himself in a famous—perhaps the most famous—oriental city, subsequent to the total overthrow in the field of the national army. The native array had been destroyed, or entirely disorganised and scattered by one decisive, crushing blow; and the small garrison of the capital surrendered—somewhat after the fashion of an oriental fortress of earlier times—almost on hearing the trumpets of our cavalry before its gates, and without the firing of a single shot on either side.

Soon after the capitulation, the mass of our regiments began to arrive in the city or in its immediate neighbourhood. Some travelled by rail, but the greater part of them approached by march route. The former and more expeditious mode of crossing country fell to our share; and after a rather tedious journey, our train of bullock and other waggons was dragged into the station by a painfully asthmatic locomotive, which seemed to be all but overcome by its late exertions. On the platform, to receive us, was a Royal Duke, accompanied by a little group of officers in smart new uniforms, which latter presented a marked contrast to our own travel-stained, and, in many instances, ragged garments. The public were kept

without the terminus by a staff of policemen, clad in white, and wearing swords, and whose general appearance had nothing in common with that of the, to us, more familiar "bobbies" of our native insular regions. Emerging from the station, amid a great din created by the vigorous practice of their art by the drummers, we saw a considerable crowd gathered together in the street. The component parts of this assembly had a very tatterdemalion look about them; and we observed that the conventionalities of dress common in Western countries were here reversed—the women wearing the most distinctive portion of a man's attire, while the men were clad in voluminous gowns reaching to their feet. We marched away along a series of streets, some of them lined with handsome buildings, others with houses of mean aspect. For the most part the thoroughfares had a deserted air; the houses and shops were closed, and apparently uninhabited; a few cafés alone were open, standing, like the gin-palaces of our own metropolis, chiefly at corners. After proceeding for a mile or more, we passed a lofty and showy edifice. In front of this a guard of white-coated soldiers was "turned out." It struck us at the time that these men had quite a healthy and soldier-like appearance, very different from the characteristics of their unfortunate comrades, whom we had lately seen by thousands as prisoners of war, and in hundreds lying slain on the battle-field. Soon after we had left this place behind, we entered a spacious square, with fine trees, and splendid houses around its sides. Here there was a great concourse of the natives, through which we marched into a barrack parade-ground, and there passed our first night in the historical city.

At daybreak we marched out into the middle of the square, for it had been decided that there we were to take up our quarters. No tents had as yet been provided for our reception, and as the hours passed on it became evident that the approaching night would needs have to be spent in the open air, a condition of things, however, to which, from two or three months' experience, we were all well accustomed and inured. It was also apparent that our bivouac was the centre of attraction for idlers of all ranks in the city; and from the crowds of these observers we judged that the place was by no means so deserted as the comparatively empty streets of the previous evening had led us

to infer. Their curiosity becoming a little obtrusive, a strong guard was mounted to keep the populace at a respectful distance, and the duty of the men thus employed was neither easy nor pleasant. Our sentries were efficiently seconded in their efforts to preserve a clear space for the camp by the policemen in white. These officials enforced their orders on the rougher portion of the crowd by a very liberal application of the stick—not the truncheon of the English “officer,” but long canes, with which they administered severe thrashings to the more disorderly members of the community.

The people who surrounded our camp were of all classes. The wealthier sort came up at a smart trot on donkeys. These beasts were relatively much finer specimens of quadrupedal, than their riders were of human, nature. But the poorer varieties of the ass tribe were, though considerably less obstinate, little better treated than their brethren in more civilised countries. Of the fair sex, many dames, with veiled countenances, arrived on donkey-back. Nothing of the visages of these ladies could be seen save two great black eyes, which remained uncovered. Stretching from the bridge of the nose to the roots of their hair in front was an extraordinary metal contrivance, which we supposed, rightly or wrongly, had something to do with maintaining the veil in its proper position. The appearance of this article precisely coincided with that of the little brazen tube which covers the muzzle and protects the “sight” of a rifle, when not in use. From this resemblance the heroes of the late campaign called the strange appendages “sight-protectors,” a name they retained during our occupation of the square. The humbler classes of women—at this period at least—were conspicuous by their absence. But the “lords of creation” represented here were of all kinds, from putative nabobs down to miserable and horribly repulsive-looking beggars. A large number of the men of the lower orders were blind of one eye. We were aware, before noticing this circumstance, that ophthalmia was a scourge of this country from the occurrence of some unfortunate cases in our own ranks; but when we got to be on more familiar terms with the townspeople, we gathered that it was customary with many young men to destroy an eye in order to escape the conscription. Perhaps there was some truth in this; at any rate, the amount of partial and even complete

blindness was very remarkable. Besides the actual natives, there was a considerable sprinkling of Europeans present, who probably chiefly belonged to southern continental nationalities. These gentry already were commencing to attempt to “push” trade by offering for sale cigars, fruit of various kinds, and sundry small wares, but not, as yet, to much purpose.

Looking over the heads of the encircling crowd, we saw that one side of the square—which latter was probably about ten acres in extent—was entirely occupied by a palace, a vast group of buildings of considerable architectural pretensions; and, as we could see, it was already tenanted by our soldiery. On another of the sides was a second palace, smaller than the first, but situated in really beautiful gardens, luxuriant with tropical vegetation, and enclosed by a highly ornamental railing. A third side, lined with fine houses, was bisected by a street shaded by well-grown acacias, and having a great display of bazaars, cafés, and shops of all sorts and sizes. The remaining side of the square consisted of a high iron railing, which divided it from a parade-ground and barrack occupying a large area of ground. The surface of the extensive square was not paved or macadamised in any fashion, but consisted—as we found before morning—merely of clay.

Darkness came on in due course, and our visitors gradually melted away. So silent was the place before midnight, that we felt it difficult to realise that we were lying in the heart of a great city. Having no covering of any kind as yet, we reposed on mother earth, fully dressed, till early morning, when, from minarets in the neighbourhood extraordinary chants and howls were given forth by men, who, we were afterwards informed, performed duties corresponding to those of priests. At certain hours this shouting occurred, and besides, to a certain extent, rendering the morning bugle superfluous, it gave us a high opinion of the vocal powers of this variety of priesthood.

While in the desert we had noticed that in this climate a heavy dew fell by night; but now its damping qualities were seen to far greater advantage. Arising from the ground, we found that the clay, aided by this abundant dew, had been during the night converted into an extremely adhesive kind of mud. Our clothes, of course, had a layer of this material plastered all over them. An

unconscious sleeper who turned about, in addition to rendering his position more comfortable, attracted to his garments another layer, and so on, according to the number of turns, till an inch or so of mud adhered to his garments. We had long slept in the open, but sand, and not clay, had formed our resting-place. The appearance of the men with this coating of mud was ludicrous; and on experimenting, it was found useless to attempt to remove it till it had dried, which was not very long, under the potent rays of the sun.

In the course of the ensuing day, a sufficient supply of capacious marquees, of the sort used by the troops of this nation, were given over to us. These, however, consisted of a canvas roof solely; they had no walls or sides; but notwithstanding this defect they suited our wants admirably, and each provided a shelter alike from the sun and dew—rain was unknown—for thirty or forty men. On the clay, to whose properties we were now fully alive, mats were spread; and we soon began to make ourselves at home with the aid of these unwonted luxuries. Having obliterated from our clothes—once red, now brown, or nearly black—as far as possible the traces of the mud, towards the evening we sallied forth to view the famous city. Taking the street, by which we had approached our present domicile some forty-eight hours before, we had not gone far along its shady footway, ere we noticed that its bordering houses had undergone quite a transformation during this short interval. Cafés innumerable had sprung into existence, with chairs and tables placed outside under the wide-spreading trees. There were English cafés; French, Italian, and Highlanders' cafés; the artillery café, and the guardsman's café. A few—but only a very limited number—of these places of entertainment were devoted to the sale of coffee, and a compound which probably was intended to represent chocolate; together with cigarettes, and tobacco in other shapes. The vast majority of them were what we may call "fully licensed houses," in which a fiery liquid was stored in bottles labelled "cognac." No pains had been spared to attract attention to all of these houses by immense signboards, by the display of flags of various nations, and by men stationed on the street to solicit a visit from the passers-by. Donkeys occupied positions at intervals in the streets, much in the same

way as we had in other cities seen cabs or hansoms doing. Having for many weeks been subjected to a course of semi-starvation, the happy thought of a good supper began to occupy a place in the minds of a small party of us. Passing through beautiful public gardens, where a band was discoursing music to a large assembly, we at last fell upon what seemed to be exactly the kind of eating-house of which we were in search. We entered, and saw that we were the only guests. A very obsequious waiter appeared, with a bill of fare in one hand, and a fly-whisk in the other. Over the former printed matter we held a consultation. It was replete with information, which was, however, in a language not very familiar to us; but finally a sufficient number of plates of what appeared on the card as "mouton" was ordered. In a few minutes each man was supplied with a piece of—possibly—mutton, about the size of a crown-piece, and one solitary potato, with its jacket on. This supper, which in amount scarcely came up to our expectations, was soon dispatched; and the waiter—who treated us with as much deference as if we had been so many field-marshal—was, with great facility, made to understand that we were desirous of paying for our refection. When the polite attendant had extracted about two francs from each of us, we departed, resolving that in future we would sup elsewhere.

After wandering about for some hours, it became evident that our time was nearly up, and that we should have to quickly retrace our steps to the square. There were clocks in various situations, the numerals on the dials of which were unintelligible to us; but from the position of the hands we accurately judged the hour. As we were already somewhat late, donkeys were proposed as a means to hasten our movements, and, on reaching the nearest donkey-stand, we selected and mounted suitable animals. Urged from behind by the sticks of their owners or drivers, the donkeys set off at full gallop. The speed was so great that it required our whole attention and utmost efforts to maintain our equilibrium by means of three of our limbs, the remaining one being fully employed in holding on our helmets. Surprised as we were at the running powers of the beasts, we were still more astonished at the abruptness with which they could bring themselves to a dead stop. The riders were happily not at a great height

from the causeway, or this custom of their steeds might have been fraught with serious results. As it was, several of the mounted found themselves seated on the street, a yard or two in advance of their respective donkeys, to the great diversion of the loungers in front of the caf  s. Without breaking our necks, however, we arrived in camp in time to hear of an important addition to our number.

While most of the occupants of the tents were disporting themselves "down town," a prisoner of war, of the very highest rank, had been brought in under a strong escort. In the adjacent barrack a prison had quickly been extemporised for his reception, by placing wooden bars on the windows of a suitable apartment, and by mounting a numerous military guard to watch over him. This personage was one whose appearance has frequently, with varying degrees of verisimilitude, been depicted by artists and photographers, and though we had daily opportunities of seeing the famous captive, it is perhaps superfluous to describe his martial figure in this place. But he had, to the eye of a soldier, a commanding, undaunted aspect; and, notwithstanding his being the prime cause of bringing us some thousands of miles into the midst of scenes of hardship and danger, we could hardly repress a feeling of sympathy for him in the fallen condition of his fortunes. Two or three days subsequent to his arrival, the writer had the honour to be one of the custodians of the defeated chief, and this was a duty of some responsibility. Two sentinels were placed, with loaded rifles, at the door of his place of confinement. These men were instructed in terms full of meaning, "not to be afraid to exceed their duty" in the event of unforeseen accidents transpiring. The prison was three storeys above the parade-ground below. A verandah ran along the front of the building past the prisoner's windows. Here, at intervals, he was brought out to enjoy the open air. When walking up and down he was accompanied by the officer of the guard, and four men, having loaded arms, constantly had their eyes upon him. He always wore a white uniform, and being a stout, robust man, it became him well as he paced along the flags with firm, soldierlike tread. Conversing volubly with the officer, he seemed to be in good spirits, and but little cast down by his misfortunes. He was occasionally visited by the chiefs of our own legions, among others by a Royal

Duke, who drove up in a showy equipage, preceded by two running footmen, who, in getting over the ground, emulated the prowess of their compatriots the donkeys.

For about a fortnight nothing very remarkable occurred in the city, or at least in that portion of it which came under our observation. We had quite settled down to the daily routine of things in the square. The prisoner above referred to was removed to another part of the town, and we saw no more of him. We were literally besieged by swarms of native vendors of a wide variety of merchandise. Women offered for sale eggs, milk, and several kinds of fruits. There were numerous money-changers, who, by quibbling over coins of different nations, sometimes victimised some of our men. Itinerary tobacconists also appeared in great force, as well as men selling lemonade at a high profit; and even at the rate of a penny a glass large quantities of filtered water—a great luxury—were disposed of.

One evening we were ordered to be up and doing on the following morning sooner than usual, and somewhat before the time the priests were wont to commence their vocal exercises. There was to be held a grand review of our army, on the very ground whereupon stood our tents. Some scores of native artificers were engaged in the construction of a grand stand, from which point the notables of the nation, and others, were to view the marching legions pass by. Our own residences were in a short time entirely demolished, everything belonging to the camp was transferred into the palace-gardens to which I have previously alluded; and an extraordinary amount of brushing up clothes and buttons, burnishing swords or bayonets, and other like matters, ensued. We had lately received new regimentals, and the review promised to be—and undoubtedly was—a very gallant show. The helmets, originally white, had been painted brown, to resemble the sands of the desert in hue; but now it was thought necessary to re-whiten them in view of the approaching event. But pipeclay was not numbered among the geological products of this country, much to the sorrow, no doubt, of its military classes. We were therefore at a loss to find a substitute. Fertile in resource, some fellows bethought themselves of several barrels of lime, which were used by the natives in whitewashing the barrack on the opposite side of the square. And

in an hour's time, by this means, the head-pieces were rendered dazzlingly white, by being simply dipped into the barrels.

After having been kept standing under the blazing sun for a couple of hours or more, we at length approached the front of the grand stand, on which were gathered together a brilliant assembly of ladies, and groups of officers in varied uniforms. It being necessary, while passing this point, to look "straight to the front," we had only an unsatisfactory glimpse of the gay party; but it was impossible to avoid noticing, amid his staff, our great, our "only" general. There were present numbers of native gentry in splendid array. The fronts of their coats were one mass of gold and silver. Their sabres and scabbards were elaborately ornamented, and their appearance generally confirmed our opinions that they were but mere "carpet" knights. Some hours later we finished up for the day by replacing our marquees and baggage in their old places on the square; and in the evening the writer formed one of a party sent a few miles to fire "farewell" shots over the grave of a departed comrade.

We latterly came to be on very friendly terms with the citizens, some of the lower orders of whom were useful to us in many ways. The ration beef was so tough that it was rarely eaten by our men, but it was eagerly looked for and devoured by the "blacks." We each had a practically unlimited allowance of this meat for dinner, and often gave it to our dusky friends, who, in return, cleaned our arms, washed clothing, or went errands for us "down town." They did the latter with remarkable honesty, for they might, with perfect ease, have decamped with the francs or dollars entrusted to them, though this sort of thing was almost unknown to happen. They were a patient, undemonstrative race of people, but of an indolent habit, which, probably, is inherent in those living in equatorial regions.

At last, orders were issued preparatory to leaving our now familiar quarters on the square. We had long expected and hoped that we would not be left behind as a part of an army of occupation in the country; and, though we had been tolerably comfortable and happy on the square, we were all well pleased when we came in sight of a certain three-decker, bearing a celebrated warrior's name, in Portsmouth Harbour.

OUR SHINING RIVER.

IV.

UNDER Mr. Pyecroft's management, the extensive prospect to be seen from Farington Folly was discussed, and Poet Pye interpreted, with, perhaps, more topographical correctness than under Clandia's sole guidance. It is easy to misplace or misname a church-spire, and hamlets, villages, and county towns appear as mere specks in the green wilderness that shimmers in the hot sunshine. A glimpse of the river may be seen here and there, but, for the most part, its course is marked only by lines of trees, and a thicker vegetation along its winding way. But there is no better vantage-ground than Faringdon Hill from which to survey the upper valley of the Thames, as it runs almost due eastwards at the foot of this steep ridge. Beneath you lies the whole fertile plain, extending even to the sources of the Thames, with the flanks of the Cotswold range bounding the distance—the Cotswolds, that stretch away into Shakespeare's country, and from whose summits, if we could make the aerial leap from here to there, we should see the Severn valley at our feet.

And, facing in an opposite direction, with a broad valley between, rise the wild and lonely downs, with their bare scarped summits, on one of the highest of which we can make out, shining white from the brown turf, the outlines of the famed White Horse. It is now nearly a thousand years since that rude outline was cut on the gaunt hillside, as a memorial of the great victory won there by Alfred and his brother Ethelred over the pirate Danes, and the simple monument has outlived all others of brass or marble, and still remains, renewed every now and then with religious care by the sturdy descendants of Alfred's Saxons. The last scouring of the White Horse was done only a few years ago, we were told by a passing countryman. And down below is the great Vale of the White Horse, with its broad plough-lands and pastures, its hamlets and farmhouses, ending in a misty haze where, when the evening sun lights up the valley, the velvet woods of Nuneham can be seen in the far distance, and Abingdon spire shining white among the shadowed woodlands.

Here you would think the valley opened into another country, watered by some other river, for in the prospect seen from the other side of the ridge the Thames, a

little country stream of no great importance, appears to—and does, in fact—take a bend to the northwards as if intending to make its way to the sea through the flats and fens of Northampton and Lincoln. But the river valley of which we get a glimpse on this side of the ridge has a far more important aspect. For, although only seen in the farthest distance, there is something in its dusky indistinctness that seems to tell of the teeming life and the busy haunts of men, of which here is the outer vestibule, for now, in spite of many a wind and twist on the way, the river has steadfastly set its course for London town.

"It is like the promised land," said Claudia softly; "only we are really to see it all, to float down past all these towns and villages, to stop wherever we please. Oh, ma'mselle, is it not charming?"

"Much more charming," said mademoiselle, with a shrug, "if it were a boat on wheels and travelled along the grande route, or in that train, for instance," as a soft curl of steam traversed like a flying serpent the depths of the vale beneath, silently except when a murmur reached us as if from some resounding cave. "Ah, how much more charming that comfortable train which would bring us to Paddington in two hours!"

Upon which mademoiselle is good-humouredly attacked for suggesting such disagreeable realities. And after all what is it to arrive? The end—the finishing-point, is a thing rather to be left in gentle obscurity than dragged into prominence, while the pleasures of the way are the most to be dwelt upon and encouraged, for surely the halts and stopping-places give the chief zest to the journey. And with that we left the pleasant prospect behind us, and descended into the town.

There was the church to be seen before we left, a roomy, handsome old church with in one corner the Pye chapel, ugly enough in itself, and of the most debased Gothic, but interesting from its monuments. There is one of a proud dame in starched Elizabethan ruff, with gilded stomacher and elaborately plaited petticoats, who seems of higher rank than that of the country squirearchy. But Pyecroft seemed doubtful whether this monument really belonged to the family, or had, perhaps, been placed there to be out of the way. As we stood looking at the monuments, mademoiselle had remained outside; the interior of churches gave the migraine, she said, and she had no taste for monuments; but Mr.

Pyecroft took advantage of the opportunity to read Claudia a little homily—how she was to prove herself worthy of the distinguished people who slept below, and to think less of her own individual pleasure than of the honour and credit of the family to which she belonged. Claudia, however, did not seem convinced.

"I would do a great deal to please you, mon père," she said affectionately; "but as for these others, they have had their day, and need not trouble themselves about me."

The most noted of the family, it seems, was one Sir Robert, who married a daughter of Hampden—the real original Hampden of the ship-money—a staunch Puritan under his wife's influence, who knocked his own house to pieces with cannon-balls, as it was held by the Royalists against his will, and in so doing contrived also to knock down the spire of the church, so the story goes, to corroborate which is the undoubted fact that the church is without a spire to this day. I can recognise the spirit of the man who knocked his own house to pieces surviving in the breast of my friend Charley, unmixed, however, with any trace of Puritanism. But is this one of the worthies whom Mr. Pyecroft holds out as a pattern for his daughter's emulation?

The question is left unsettled, as we start on the drive for Charlwood Hall. Mr. Pyecroft drives a pair of good-looking screws in the family wagonnette, but, screws as they are, they get over the ground at a good pace, and we are soon within sight of the woods of Charlwood. But before we reached the entrance-lodge there met us, coming in an opposite direction, another wagonnette, drawn by another pair of screws, with a stout, rosy-looking man as charioteer. He saluted us with a vague but friendly signal, with whip and finger, once common among coaching men, and which still survives in a few old omnibus-drivers, and then suddenly, with a look of recognition on his face, he drew up beside us.

"What, Pyecroft!" cried the charioteer, in hoarse but friendly tones. "Well, I was thinking about you. I was just telling my daughters—there's where Pyecroft lives, my co-trustee. Extraordinary!"

"Why, you surely were not going to pass without giving me a call, Boothby?"

Mr. Pyecroft's tones were friendly enough, but a chill seemed to have fallen upon him; his face looked quite grey and

pinched all of a sudden; perhaps it was only the contrast with the florid hues of his friend that made the difference.

"Yes, I was, though," cried Boothby with a jolly laugh. "Extraordinary, but so it is. Must get to Oxford to-night; promised my girls; twenty miles to drive; soon get twilight."

"Your daughters!" cried Pyecroft, raising his hat. "Delighted to know them, I'm sure. And this is my daughter."

"Is it so!" cried Boothby, chuckling again. "Extraordinary! The little chit that I can remember so high," marking off an imaginary space with the thong of his driving-whip. "And now, what's this I hear, settlements and so on. Oh, fie, Miss Pyecroft, and never asked your guardian's leave!"

"Are you my guardian?" cried Claudia boldly. "Then you are a very neglectful one, for I don't remember ever seeing you before."

"Quite right; perhaps you don't," cried Boothby, laughing again. "Neglectful! I should think so! Done nothing but sign my name every time your father asked me. Well, it will soon be over now. All kinds of good wishes."

Nothing would induce Mr. Boothby to make a halt at Charlwood Hall. No, he had promised his girls to reach Oxford that night, and he hadn't a moment to lose, but he sat there chatting, nevertheless, while the horses champed their bits and made feints of biting each other's necks. He had left Bristol a week ago, he said, and had been driving about the country ever since. The greatest fun in the world, he pronounced it. Had been missing from his home for ever so long; hadn't even a postal address. He hadn't received a letter all that time, or seen a newspaper. Mr. Pyecroft politely offered a copy of the day's paper, which he had in his pocket, but Boothby waved the offer aside. No, he was going to keep it up all the time—this jolly state of things.

"Best thing out," went on Boothby, red and radiant, mopping his face, that was like the rising sun, and flapping away the flies that were the one bitter drop in the cup of happiness. "Talk about the Rhine!" with a gesture of contempt; "this is the country for me! My girls have dragged me abroad every year; but no more of it. Why, even they agree this is better fun—don't you, girls?"

Thus appealed to the girls, who were

pale and thin, but clever-looking, agreed that they had enjoyed their drive through the country very much; and at Oxford they hoped to take a boat for a few days.

"A boat!" cried Boothby with his jolly laugh. "They want to get me into their gimcrack little boats! A barge, if you like, or a lighter, with a team of horses to pull me along!" And Boothby laughed till the wagonette rolled about on its springs, while his delighted chuckle was the last sound we heard as the wheels of his vehicle rolled away in the distance.

"Why didn't you say, father," cried Claudia, "that we should be on the river, too? We might meet, perhaps."

"Well, you see," replied Mr. Pyecroft, pursing up his lips, "Boothby is a capital fellow—in business relations altogether splendid; but I don't think your mother would quite like—don't you see!—any intimacy."

Claudia was silent, but not altogether convinced, as we drove up to the Hall, whose grey weather-beaten front contrasted charmingly with the green lawn and flowering shrubs that surrounded it, while a background of tall elms gave a certain air of solemn repose. The Hall was a modest Tudor manor-house, with two projecting gables, whose mullioned windows twinkled in the sunshine in a setting of creepers and purple flowers, while the cool recessed centre was approached by a sombre projecting porch—a porch with an upper chamber—where you might fancy some old divine with a peaked beard sitting poring over his solemn tomes. The porch, however, was an addition, probably of Jacobean date, and it led into a hall which had also been remodelled at the same date, when the conveniences of family life took the place of the social, hospitable state of former days. Then the high old timber roof had been replaced by a handsome panelled ceiling, but the old open hearth remained at one end, and the room, cool and shaded, had been made the general summer room of family resort. Something of solemn gloom there was even in the filtered light that streamed through the diamond-latticed panes, where here and there a bit of stained glass disclosed some ancient coat-of-arms or quaint device, and still more in the massive buffets of polished oak, a little relieved by the stores of old blue Nankin china that loaded their shelves. The polished oaken floor was dark and solemn too, with its broken reflections of stray gleams of light that crept among the

ancient furniture, while a tarnished and faded Eastern rug in the centre, where stood a table well covered with books and periodicals, seemed the centre of such quiet family life as here might flourish; for here, too, was a work-basket, with patches of bright crewel-work, and threads of coloured silks and wool, that made a kind of sunshine in this shady place.

But the bright and girlish element in this scene, somewhat cold as well as stately and refined—the youthful element was evidently controlled and repressed. The central figure, all in keeping with its surroundings, was the tall, stately form of the lady of the manor; her handsome profile thrown out against the dark oak panelling, as she advanced with a stately kind of grace to welcome the newly-arrived guest.

And yet you felt that the dignified calm of Mrs. Pycroft's face was only worn as a social mask, beneath which the lines that care and sorrow had traced were but half concealed. There was a protecting kind of tenderness in her manner to her husband—a tenderness that you missed altogether when she spoke to her daughter. Not that there was any unkindness in her tone; but a certain impatience of feminine ways, as if she thought that Providence had dealt hardly with her that she should have a daughter to manage.

To me Mrs. Pycroft's manner was bright and cordial; she had many questions to ask about her nephew—questions which showed me that she was tolerably well-acquainted with his doings. And then she turned to her husband.

"Ernest, we have lost our neighbours, I hear, the Thomases—for the season, that is."

"Would it were for ever!" groaned Mr. Pycroft.

"They have gone down the river," continued the wife. "We must try and overtake them, Mr. Penrice."

"Surely not," remonstrated Mr. Pycroft.

"Indeed yes," persisted Mrs. Pycroft. "I don't mind being civil to them on the water. And then I want Mr. Penrice to see Rebecca. She is the beauty of the neighbourhood—and we are renowned for pretty girls. And her voice, it would be charming to hear that voice on the water. And, Claudia," turning to her daughter with a slight air of malice, "you would be pleased to meet your old play-fellow, the little boy you used to make love to so shamefully."

"My dear madame," here interposed mademoiselle, who had just entered. "Why shall you say lof? that is one word that shall not be said to my Claudia. That is one word that shall be what the Pacific Islanders call Tapu—forbidden, that is never to be spoke or even thought about."

Claudia only smiled rather disdainfully and devoted herself attentively to her crewels. But presently she looked up and said:

"Mother, we shall meet other friends on the river—perhaps Mr. Boothby and his two daughters."

"You have seen Mr. Boothby?" cried Mrs. Pycroft, showing more excitement at the intelligence than there was any apparent cause to justify. "Ernest," she called to her husband, "Mr. Boothby here! Why was not I told?"

Mr. Pycroft explained that we had only casually met him. "And he won't come to see us. Doesn't that look unfriendly?"

"He seemed very friendly indeed," remarked Claudia. "Extraordinarily so," mimicking Mr. Boothby's tones. "But how should he be my guardian?" she asked quickly.

"That was his nonsense, Claudia," said Mrs. Pycroft rather severely. "Of course your father is your natural and only guardian."

Well, after dinner Mrs. Pycroft drew me into a long and confidential talk about Charlwood and Claudia. For family reasons she said it was imperative that they should marry. And she spoke indignantly of Rebecca and her attempt to secure the young man for herself. In fact, I found that she contemplated a regular cutting-out expedition, hoping to carry off Charlwood bodily, from under the very guns of the enemy, and she looked to me to act as pilot and bring her alongside the pirate craft, while on the other hand I was bound by solemn promise to Charlwood to keep the two expeditions apart at all risks. The situation was a perplexing one, but this I left to the future to disentangle.

We were to start early in the morning to avoid the full heat of the day, and I heard Claudia on the lawn before six o'clock, in confabulation with Peter, the gardener, who had a certain interest in, or rather against the expedition, inasmuch as he had been told off to tow the boat for some miles down the stream, where the river was too narrow or too much choked with weeds to give free play to the oars.

Peter was sure it was going to rain, while Claudia indignantly pronounced that nothing was more improbable. Soon after I was giving my opinion on the subject. There had been rain in the night, and heavy masses of cloud hung about the horizon, while vapours rose gently from the meadows and curled over the surface of the water. But there was a general chirpiness among the birds, and a lazy kind of oily smoothness on the water, that showed rather for fine weather; and Claudia, delighted with my judgment, ran in to drag mademoiselle out of bed; while Peter and I went down to the boat-house to see that everything was ready.

The smooth, soft turf led down to the river's brink, and, following this, we came to a little creek—silent, still, and deep—across which was built the boat-house, where floated two or three boats and a canoe. We chose a pair-oared boat that would hold three sitters at a pinch; and Peter, still grumbling evil prophecies about the weather, went back to the house to fetch the wraps and the provisions; for we were to breakfast *al-fresco* at the first cool stopping-place.

Presently Claudia appeared, dragging along the reluctant mademoiselle, very sleepy and cross, and protesting that it was madness to start under such inclement skies, and piteously entreating to be allowed to return to her warm bed. But Claudia, without compunction, hurried mademoiselle into the boat. Mrs. Pyecroft had declined the early start at the last moment, but would join us later on in the day. Then Peter appeared with his load, his last remonstrances disregarded; the water-gate was thrown open, and we pushed out from the placid creek into the shining river.

In springing from the bow of the boat to gain the towpath on the other side of the river, Peter gave us a lurch that made poor mademoiselle shriek with terror. Let her get out and walk, she begged; she would gladly tramp all the way to London on the banks of the river. Looking back with a grin, Peter started with a rush that gave the boat another good lurch, as she first felt the pull of the line. But now we were fairly started, and Claudia soothed her companion's alarms; and as the boat glided smoothly along, the water rippling at her bows, mademoiselle allowed that the motion was soothing, and the surroundings pleasant, and presently she showed her confidence in the safety of the ship by sinking into a gentle slumber.

There was a charm indescribable about that morning as we glided easily along; Claudia, with the yoke-lines over her shoulders, dexterously avoiding shoals and sandbanks, and guiding us through the weedy channel. In the air was a pleasant earthy smell from the rain of last night, mingled with the scent of new-mown hay, and the delicate fragrance of the water-plants. Now and then we caught sight of the long range of hills on the right, the mists wreathing about their summits and mingling with the clouds above giving an aspect of mystery and even grandeur to the scene. Pleasant, too, were the locks with their creaking, weather-worn gates, with their general leakiness and cool plashiness, as we sank into their shady recesses. And then we came to a fine old time-worn bridge—Radcot Bridge, with its three high-crowned arches, and here in a shady nook, within sight of the bridge, we landed and prepared to breakfast.

Mademoiselle was thoroughly awake by this time, and good-tempered in the prospect of her morning *café au lait*. A fire was soon kindled and the kettle boiled, and Claudia arranged the breakfast on the greensward, a pleasant Arcadian meal, that refreshed and renovated the somewhat languid energies associated with early rising.

Who would think that in this quiet spot where alders and poplars wave, and the river flows lazily by, while cows stand knee-deep in the water in shaded nooks—who would think that anything stirring could have ever happened here? And yet there is a battle recorded—a battle of Radcot Bridge. Knights in panoply have charged across over those high-crowned arches, and swords clashed, and arrows hurtled through the air, while shouts and war-cries echoed from those placid-looking hills.

I don't think many people know much about this battle, but Mr. Pyecroft has kindly lent me a monograph written by him for some archaeological society; from which it appears that Radcot Bridge was the great battlefield of the century, and that to its result may be traced the establishment of our liberties, and of the judiciously tempered constitution under which we live.

It was when young King Richard sat on the throne of his grandfather, the mighty Edward—a throne that, like a skittish horse, required a good deal of sitting. A skipping King that ambled up and down,

rudely judged the rough barons about him, but a King who, in culture and refinement, was far in advance of the great feudatories of his kingdom. It was the reign of youth that he chose to inaugurate, a joyous renaissance of beauty and splendour, and then heavy old uncles interfered, and sour, self-seeking cousins. The great feudatories rose and marched upon London. The King was helpless beleaguered in the Tower; but one of his favourites, of the new order of things, Robert de Vere, who, as Duke of Ireland, might boast of the greatest titular dignity in the realm, was busy in the West, and in the Marches of Wales, where he had great influence, raising an army to rescue the King from his barons.

The one passable road from Wales was over Radcot Bridge—you may trace it now—rising the hill to Faringdon, and then along the ridge, and under it to Abingdon, and so by Maidenhead and Taplow to London; in fact, with little variation, the old coach-road to Gloucester and St. David's. Well, here lay the barons, on the flank of the hills above and drawn up in the meadows by the road, and De Vere and his tired, dusty levies straggling along the weary highway from the West. The bridge rises clear and fair before them, but the keen eye of De Vere, who rides in front of his host, discerns the gleam of arms among the trees. Everything depends upon crossing the river, and with the best of his knights De Vere charges across the bridge, to find himself in front of the serried ranks of wary Bolingbroke, who is the leader of the day. Few of the knights who charged across Radcot Bridge returned to tell the tale. The very rushes by the river seemed to turn to armed men, and surrounded and cut off from the bridge, De Vere was one of the few to escape by leaping his horse into the stream, and, accoutred as he was, swimming to the opposite bank. And hence De Vere, concealed by friendly partisans among the country folk, found his way to the coast, and so to the Low Countries, where he died a few years after. But the winner of the fight, you will remember, lived to be King of England, as Henry the Fourth.

Now if De Vere had won this fight, and Henry had run away or been slain, there would probably have been no Henry the Fourth, no house of Lancaster, no civil wars, no Tudors, no Stuarts, no Long Parliament—perhaps no Parliament at all, and hence, as Pyecroft very judiciously

sums up, we may attribute all the blessings we now enjoy to the result of the battle of Radcot Bridge.

Claudia, too familiar, perhaps, with her father's pamphlet, does not seem impressed with his arguments. What is more important for us is that Peter leaves us at Radcot Bridge, and that we are thus, as it were, cut adrift from all ties of home, represented by the towing-line, and left to our own resources. Claudia feels that it is like a start in life, and is quite jubilant at Peter's departure, but mademoiselle is becoming anxious. "Where are we to sleep to-night?" asks she. "Oh, in the boat, I suppose, or perhaps up in a tree," replies Claudia airily.

We did not work very hard that day at the oar, but paddled, or, when there was any stream, floated lazily along, or where we caught the breeze, hoisted an impromptu sail—a stout shawl belonging to mademoiselle—resting a good deal in shady places, and talking and laughing a good deal at times, becoming pleasantly intimate and friendly, and yet not in a manner to rouse mademoiselle's anxiety. Only when the latter dragged in Charlwood's name—ah, why wasn't he here? How our happiness would be complete if that dear M. Charlwood were present!—her remarks were not received with any enthusiasm.

Drifting or paddling, we had passed through some miles of pleasant, fertile country. The hills now approached and now receded; and then showed right in front of us, barring up, as it seemed, the course of the river, which presently took a deep bend to the northwards, just under the slope of the hill which rose almost from its margin. And where the hills broke away and seemed to offer a passage to the river, Father Thames obstinately set his face in the other direction, so that the westerly breeze that had favoured us so long blew almost in our teeth.

Then we came to a ferry—Bablock Hithe, I think it was called—where the ferryman signalled to us to pull in; and there we found the elder Pyecrofts, who had, it appeared, found quarters for us all at Staunton Harcourt. Mr. Pyecroft had also some letters for me which had been sent on from Lechlade, and among them one in Charlwood's handwriting. Mrs. Pyecroft watched me narrowly as I read the letter; no doubt she had recognised the hand. There were only a few words, begging me to meet the writer at Oxford on the following—now this—evening, under

urgent and peculiar circumstances. Looking at the map, I saw that, while taking the bend of the river, there were at least ten miles between us and Oxford, yet that across the country, through Cumnor, it was only a walk of four miles or so. And I should see the village to which the fate of Amy Robsart had given a lugubrious fame.

"You need make no excuses, Mr. Penrice," said Mrs. Pyecroft, pressing my hand with fervour. "I think I know your errand. Bring him back to us—bring him back, and I shall bless you always."

But Claudia, I thought, looked sorry and regretful at my departure, and the notion gave me a throb of secret joy. For what had been but a dream of fancy hitherto had begun to assume definite form and power. Those dark, luminous eyes of hers that had drawn me thus far, now seemed to hold me in a magnetic kind of attraction. I watched for a glance from them as the ferryman landed me on the opposite shore, and they followed me as, leaning over mademoiselle's shoulder, Claudia made her wave adieux from them both.

"Come back—come back soon!" cried mademoiselle.

And Claudia's eyes said the same.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

CHAPTER I. TWENTY YEARS AFTER.

"Twenty years, did you say, sir, since you were in these parts?"

"Twenty years," with a sigh. "A good big slice out of a lifetime, and yet I could fancy, sitting now and looking over the river and the meadows to the old grey spire yonder, that I had never stirred away from it. I suppose if I began to walk about the place, I should find it had spread and altered as all places do, but just here there is no change in anything except mine host. How long did you say poor old Braby has been dead?"

"It was six years last Michaelmas since he was took, sir, and he did not last more than a matter of a month or five weeks after. I had been here in the business, as you may say, one way and another, over ten years before that, and it was an understood thing——"

"That you took to it when he died? I see. You are not so much of a new comer as I supposed, and you will be all the better company. You must have known some of the people who were living down here

when I used to come to and fro myself—the Ellertons, for example?"

The landlord of the White Horse, to which old-fashioned designation the comfortable hostelry in the high street of West Saxford still clung—cast a sharp glance, in which was a mingling of surprise, satisfaction, and curiosity, at the guest by whom he was thus interrogated. It was a long time since people in that part of the world had been in the habit of talking of "the Ellertons." For the last fourteen or fifteen years there had only been one to talk of, and he had been too young and of too little consequence to afford much food for gossip. Certainly, this gentleman's reminiscences were of a time far removed, in more senses than one, from the present. The good man, regarding him critically, put his probable age a little on the right—that is to say, the sunny-side of fifty; a tall, straight, soldierly-looking man, his skin bronzed, his hair tinged with grey; the expression of his face thoughtful, and even dreamy, excepting when, as at this moment, it was roused into attention, and the quick, penetrating flash of the keen grey eyes told of a brain apt at receiving an impression and swift to analyse it. A gentleman, for one thing, mine host decided; in all probability an officer to boot—anyhow, a man used to command, and not easy to hoodwink.

"Mr. Ellerton of Hazeldean, you mean, sir, the poor gentleman that was murdered? I was not here at the time, but I have heard it talked about hundreds of times. I suppose there never was anything before or since that made such a stir in the neighbourhood. Is it possible you were staying here at the time, sir?"

The stranger nodded gravely.

"I was in the town at the time," he said. "And, more than that, I was acquainted with the family, and had a great respect for them. But I was only a bird of passage, and I never heard more of what followed than I could gather from the newspapers. There was an inquest, I believe, which was productive of nothing, and an adjourned enquiry which was not more satisfactory. As far as I could make out, there was not a single arrest made!"

"Not one, sir, for the very good reason that there was not a shadow of suspicion attaching to anybody. The poor gentleman had not an enemy in the world. It seemed so preposterous to think of murder in connection with a man so popular and so

beloved that, in spite of all the medical evidence to the contrary, there were those who clung to the belief that he had destroyed himself, for a long time, sir; then there came the discovery of the pocket-book."

"Then there was a discovery of something at last?"

"Just of that—nothing more. It was found at the bottom of a ditch a good step from the spot where the murder was committed, long enough afterwards. It was a common little leather pocket-book, lined with red silk, and with an elastic round it. There must have been hundreds and thousands like it, but Miss Dunscombe knew it, and would have sworn to it, if it would have done any good. She had missed it before, but she could not be sure Mr. Ellerton had had it about him that particular day; and there was no means of proving that he had been plundered; so she seems to have felt satisfied so far, until it turned up. It put a stop to the talk about suicide, which nobody who was open to conviction had ever lent an ear to from the first, and that was all the good it did."

"They did all they could, I suppose? They did not spare money? Stephen Ellerton had the name of being a rich man?" the stranger asked curiously.

"He was like a good many others," the landlord replied with a shrug of his shoulders. "When his affairs came to be looked into, the money was not there. He had dabbled in foreign stocks, and goodness knows what, and had burned his fingers nicely. It was hard upon the women, for he had never been the man to enter into business matters at home, and they had not a notion but that he was as well off as he was reported to be. No doubt he was always expecting things to come round, as men who go in for that kind of gambling do; and perhaps they would if he had had time. As it was, there was nothing to speak of for the widow and child."

"Good Heavens!" murmured the other.

The rest he knew—had known for twenty years. For this he was not prepared.

"Yes, it was hard lines," mine host continued complacently. "And she was not the woman to fight against it, and look at the bright side of things. From all I have ever heard, just the contrary—a spoilt, petted, tender sort of thing—good for nothing but to look pretty and be made a fuss over. If it had not been for her sister,

she'd have ended her days, most likely, in an asylum. I have no liking for Miss Dunscombe—she's as hard as the nether millstone, and as proud as Lucifer—but I will say she was the saving of those two—mother and son. And they do say she sacrificed her own prospects for them. There was a talk of her getting married just before the murder, and a very good match they say she would have made—nothing in the world against it, excepting a matter of five years or so on the wrong side. But never a word did anyone hear of it after her sister's trouble. They do say she sent the poor fellow about his business that very night."

"She did not lose much time in making up her mind to the sacrifice, if sacrifice it was," the other observed shortly. "And afterwards? They must have left Hazel-dean, as a matter of course?"

"They got out of it as quickly as ever they could. Nothing would have kept them there, after what had happened, though, if it had only been a question of expense, they might as well have remained there. People don't take to a house, nowadays even, when we are all so strong-minded, when there has been a crime like that committed—and they could not get rid of the place for years. It was thought they would leave West Saxford altogether; but Mrs. Ellerton had a fancy to stay within reach of her husband's grave, and sure enough, so she did, until they laid her in it, six years later."

"She died?" with quick interest. "And the other—Miss Dunscombe—what became of her?"

"She went on living here just the same, and her nephew along with her. If you'd take the trouble of changing places with me, sir, just for a minute, you'd have a good look at young Ellerton, and see for yourself what he has grown into. That's him walking along by the riverside with the young lady in the pink gown;" and the landlord made way for his guest as he spoke.

The latter changed sides and looked out as he was requested. The window was open, for it was midsummer, and the weather was seasonable, and by dint of leaning out a little, he was able to watch the young couple for a considerable distance.

"He is a well-built young fellow," he said at length, drawing his head in, "and he bears himself like a gentleman, neither slouching nor swaggering. As far as I can see at this distance, he has a look of his

father—a good, honest face, not handsome. Who is the girl?"

"You may well ask that if you take any interest in the family," the other replied significantly. "The two are scarcely mentioned apart nowadays. There's no moral doubt but that they'll make a match of it, only the young lady, she's a coquette, and one man at a time dangling after her is not enough for her. You may remember Mr. Bevan, the town-clerk, sir? She is his daughter, and she'll be worth having, for she is the only child, and he is worth a heap of money."

"But how about the lad? He has no prospects, has he?"

The landlord laughed.

"That depends," he observed shrewdly, "upon what one takes to be prospects. He has no property to come into, if that is what you mean. But he has something here," tapping his forehead as he spoke. "And he has been put in the way of bringing it out, thanks to Mr. Bevan. The way that man has stood by the widow and the orphan warms one's heart to think of it! It will never be forgotten to him. I've had it from them that have been told of it by Miss Dunscombe herself, and she is not one that it is easy to move. He took that youngster into his office, without a penny, and he has pushed him on consistent ever since. He is four-and-twenty now, is young Ellerton; and it is the belief of everybody in West Saxford that Mr. Bevan is only waiting until the day he marries his daughter, to take him into partnership."

The stranger gave a slight shrug of his shoulders as he observed sententially:

"It is better to be born lucky than rich." I don't think," he added, after a pause, "I have any very distinct recollection of the man you mean. Easy enough for the Nobody of twenty years since, to be Somebody to-day, and there were not many of the townspeople I knew anything about. I have a remembrance of the name, too. Was there a wife—a pretty, showy, little woman?"

"That is the same, sir. You've got it now, and no mistake!" mine host replied with animation. "She was just such another as her daughter. They do say she went nigh ruining him with her love of dress and her extravagance; and he could refuse her nothing, he just doated upon her. He made a sore trouble of losing her, but I'm far from thinking it the worst thing that could have happened him."

"And she—did she share this partiality of his for the family at Hazeldean?"

"Ah, that I can't say. The children were always a good deal together, if that counts for anything; but she died within a few months of Mrs. Ellerton herself, and that is a good many years ago now. No, I don't know that there was any uncommon friendliness between the families. At one time it was thought Mr. Bevan had a mind to console himself with Miss Dunscombe."

"With Miss Dunscombe!" in a short, startled voice. "Well, why not? It would have been suitable enough, I suppose. Miss Dunscombe must be getting on."

"Got on, sir, pretty considerably, I should say. She must be fifty, if she's a day, and she don't wear well. That hard sort don't. But I don't credit it myself. I don't see why, because a man is near in most things, it is to be taken for granted it is not in him to act open-handed in one. I am not one for spying out a motive for everything under the sun. There's many a kind thing done on impulse, say I."

"In the first instance, yes," assented the other. "But a man does not go on acting on impulse through a succession of years. There must have been a warm feeling somewhere in this case; but what matters, so long as one person, at least, is the better for it, and nobody the worse? She is a pretty little girl apparently, and I wish them both joy."

He rose from his chair as he spoke, and the cutlets he had ordered making their appearance at the same moment, the landlord left him to demolish them. He drank his wine, however, without eating much; it was not that the food was not to his taste, though, like most Anglo-Indians, he was fastidious, but his appetite had deserted him. He felt sad and preoccupied. The ghosts of old times were busy with him, and refused to be banished.

"What a fool I am!" he said to himself at last impatiently, "to let myself be preyed upon and put out by the thought of things which happened a lifetime ago. It was like my folly, breaking my journey here at all, and unkind of me, too, for I might have had another day with my little girl. But I always wanted to know whether, in all these years, there had been any light whatever thrown upon the miserable mystery of that man's death, and there seems to have been none—not a glimmer. And Margaret Dunscombe, here in the same place with me, a woman of fifty, a proverb of hardness and self

sacrifice, goodness and repulsiveness combined, believing possibly as she believed then! But no, that she cannot. It was too monstrous!" and he pushed the table from him, and lighting his cigar, gave up the pretence of eating.

"Well," he soliloquised presently, somewhat more calmly. "Granted that it was her own doing, poor soul! it is she who has suffered for it—not I. She knew what she was entailing upon herself, when she returned my letter to me, unread, and I had done my part. Heaven knows I have no right to complain of the consequences to myself. If her life had been as happy as mine, if she had found in some other man all that I found in another woman—but what an 'if!' Well, she has one interest in life—her nephew is not less to her, perhaps, than my Mary to me—and she has the pull so far: she has not to go out to Ceylon, and leave the only creature she has left in the world to care for, behind her! Thank goodness it is only for two years, and then—home and peace!"

The June evening was wearing on apace, and it occurred to him that he could spend it more pleasantly and profitably reconnoitring the once familiar neighbourhood, than taking his ease at his inn. He might probably have found a cicerone in his host, had he cared for one; but he had learned all he wished to know, and was not in a talkative mood; so he sallied forth alone. The main street, along which he took his way, was too little altered for him to detect any change in it; but when he once got, so to say, clear of the body of the town, he found the usual mushroom growth of villas of various sizes, and in various styles, surrounding it. Almost mechanically he had taken the direction of Hazeldean, and the former unoccupied space between the quaint old house and the original limits of West Saxford, as he had known it, was now so built over, that he found himself at the gates before he knew where he was. Time, unkind to it in one respect, had been the reverse in another, and the trees had so grown up around it, that its neighbours gained little by their proximity. The shrubbery, in which its master had met his death, looked denser and darker than of old, and involuntarily, perhaps unconsciously, Colonel Hamilton quickened his steps as he passed it. Beyond it came a

fresh series of more modern residences, and in the garden of one of these, daintily clad in delicate muslin and ribbons, and hanging on the arm of an elderly man of grave and somewhat careworn aspect, was the girl he had seen, earlier in the evening, with young Ellerton. Twenty years had passed over the lawyer's head, since the other had seen him; but, apart from the clue afforded by his daughter's presence, the latter recognised the face though he had failed to recognise the name.

In a moment he remembered not only him, but how and where they had last confronted each other.

"The last day I was in West Saxford," he thought, as, standing where he could see without being seen, he watched the two, the girl evidently coaxing her father for something. "The very day of the murder. I remember it well enough. Fortescue wanted to speak to him about an investment, and I went into the private room behind the office, and made a third at the interview. Poor old Fortescue! I wonder what became of him. He was never satisfied that he was doing the best with his money. And this man has made a pot of it! Not been any more scrupulous than the rest of them, I imagine. Strange that Stephen Ellerton's son should be the one to profit by it."

He lounged on, his thoughts outstripping his steps, and paying little attention to surrounding objects, for another hour or more, until the dusk became so apparent as to recall his mind to their contemplation. Then he turned, and began to retrace his steps with greater alacrity. The gas was lighted in a pretty sitting-room on the ground-floor of Mr. Bevan's house, and he himself sat in an armchair, with his back to the window, reading. His daughter was not there, but the colonel, passing this time on the opposite side of the road, saw her, too, on the garden-path, this time not with her father, and not arm-in-arm. On the contrary, the man who was with her was young, and his arm encircled her waist. The unsuspected observer shrugged his shoulders and smiled with some amusement—yet not without a tinge of regretful pity—as he walked on.

"Mine host was right," he said to himself. "She is not content to have one string to her bow, for, whoever that may be, it is not Ellerton."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXIX. AT SEA.

WHEN Theo had time to think, when she was left alone on board the mail-steamer at Southampton, when the bell had rung, and Hugh's tall figure had disappeared among the crowd, she was seized with a terrible loneliness. All the old peaceful trust in Hugh had come back within the last two days, brought to life again by his own generous unselfishness. She knew that he loved her now, just as he did in the winter, when he asked her to marry him; she knew, when she thought about it quietly, that he always would love her just the same; but she was not angry with him now, only sad and sorry. She knew now that this love was of a high kind, worthy of that lover who said:

For I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.

This is possible, but it is very rare, and seldom understood or rewarded in this life.

Theo understood it better than many women do, and perhaps Gerald, for whom she was giving up everything, would hardly have approved of the tears that dimmed her eyes as she looked back at England, and thought regretfully and tenderly of Hugh. He had made her promise that she would write to him, and would tell him if there was anything in the world that he could do for her.

Theo had an instinctive feeling that she would break this last promise, and that Hugh's help, dear and valuable as it must always be, would be the last thing she would ask for in future.

Their parting had been very friendly

and grave; both faces were sad. Hugh had not tormented her with a word of remonstrance; he had inspected her cabin, had talked to the captain, had hardly, to outward eyes, shown as much feeling as her brother would have shown under such circumstances.

At the last moment he discovered some slight acquaintances of his own among the passengers—a Colonel and Mrs. Forester, who were going back to an appointment at Cape Town. In his gravest, most indifferent manner, Hugh introduced his cousin to these people, who looked at her kindly; but Theo was rather vexed and bored by the introduction. She had had a fancy for being quite alone, and dreaming, and watching the sea, all the way out to Cape Town.

Colonel Forester, a good-humoured, middle-aged man, who had known Hugh's father pretty well some years before, was a little puzzled by the mystery of this girl's going out alone. He seized Hugh just as he was leaving the ship.

"Your cousin is of course going to some friends at the Cape?" he said. "We can't be of any use out there?"

"Thank you," said Hugh with a curious coldness of look and manner; "I can hardly answer. There is only one person—in fact, my cousin is going out to be married. I suppose he will meet her."

"Oh, very well," said Colonel Forester. "Then of course he will have made all arrangements. Do I know him, I wonder?"

"That is not likely," said Hugh. "He went out last spring to the Diamond Fields. His name is Fane."

"You astonish me!" said Colonel Forester. "Miss Meynell surely—But I beg your pardon," as Hugh turned a little paler, and made a movement to go; "I

only meant to say that Mrs. Forester and I will be very glad if we can be of any use."

"Thank you, Colonel Forester. I shall be most grateful," said Hugh; and then he shook hands with the Colonel, and went gravely on shore.

Colonel Forester went back to his wife and told her the explanation of the mystery, adding that this marriage was plainly against the wish of the young lady's relations.

"You must be kind to the poor girl," said the Colonel, in his eager manner. "This Diamond Fields fellow will be marrying her from St. George's Hotel, or something of that sort. She must be married from our house."

Mrs. Forester was very gentle, rather shy, and full of that active goodness which soldiers' wives so often have in perfection. She had lost all her children when they were little, and this, and the sweetness of her brown eyes, and the clearness of her wit, may have explained the fact that she ruled the Colonel with an undisputed sway. She had also ruled his regiment when he had been attached to one.

On this occasion she did not quite agree with him.

"Don't say anything about that yet," she said. "The Meynells are not a very nice family; and as to my being kind to this girl, she looks so cold and stiff that I am afraid of her. I don't think she wants me, Arthur, really."

"How can a girl be going out alone, and not want you?" asked Colonel Forester.

His wife laughed, and shook her head.

For the first few days Theo was very much alone, and seemed to wish to be so. Her looks and ways kept people at a distance; the only person who talked to her much was Colonel Forester, who admired her, and took a great interest in her, and was a good-natured chatterbox besides. His friendship with her advanced much faster than his wife's. Mrs. Forester did not quite like the idea of a girl of good family starting off in this adventurous manner against the wish of her friends; she was also puzzled by the fact that Theo was making a sort of friendship with a very odd little woman, who emerged from her cabin after two or three days, and walked feebly about on deck, holding Theo's arm. She was dressed very smartly, and had a black, untidy fringe hanging over her forehead; she went off into silly

fits of laughter, and sometimes had a little dark baby in her arms, and a second-rate young man standing by her side; but this young man was generally playing cards, or amusing himself in some way apart from his wife. Mrs. Forester had several friends on board, and neither she nor any of them thought these people at all fit to speak to. She would not have noticed them among the varied crowd of passengers, unless they had appealed to her kindness in some way, but the sympathy that Theo showed this little creature was a strange thing, and attracted Mrs. Forester's eyes, which, with all their softness, had a keen power of watching. Even Colonel Forester was puzzled, and held a little back from his friend Miss Meynell, when she sat for a whole evening beside this woman on deck, under the glorious stars, and the strange pair of friends talked in a low voice together, each deeply interested in what the other was saying.

At last the little woman gathered up her shawls and went below, and Theo sat still where she was, looking out upon the sea. Some yards away Colonel Forester was standing behind his wife's chair. They had been drinking coffee, and talking to some of their friends, who had now left them; the eyes and thoughts of both husband and wife turned towards Theo.

"Now, I shall go and talk to her," whispered the Colonel. "Will you come too?"

"Suppose I go by myself?" said Mrs. Forester softly.

"That's a capital idea, Fanny. Ask her to go ashore with us to-morrow."

"We shall see," said Mrs. Forester, and she moved gently across and joined Theo.

She sat down, and began talking about Madeira, where they would arrive the next day. Theo talked too, but in such a dreamy way that Mrs. Forester found it very difficult to go on with the conversation; still, in spite of Theo's most absent answers, the soft beauty of her profile, the light and depth in her eyes when she looked up, the noble gentleness that seemed to breathe about her like an atmosphere, all charmed and attracted Mrs. Forester, so that she felt no wish to get up and go away.

"This is a very remarkable girl," she thought to herself, and she studied Theo through one or two long silences, during which the other people laughed and talked in the distance and somebody was singing; and through it all the steamer throbbed and panted, and the water washed gently

along her sides, and she left a long luminous path over the dark sea in her wake, and the great stars shone down gloriously.

"Do you like being at sea? I suppose it is your first long voyage?" said Mrs. Forester.

"It is lovely," said Theo. "Yes; I have only crossed the Channel."

"I wonder if you have any idea of what—what Africa is like?" said Mrs. Forester after a pause.

"Not much, I suppose," said Theo, "though I have been thinking about it. But it must be rather free and glorious. It is very sad to go out there, meaning to hate it, like that poor little thing."

"Do you mean——" began Mrs. Forester.

"That little Mrs. Lea. We are going to the same place, you know—the Diamond Fields, and she is so unhappy; she thinks it is all so dreadful."

"I am afraid the Fields——" said Mrs. Forester, and then she stopped herself, for she did not like to prophesy evil.

"She is so ill and miserable, and so anxious about her baby, and I think her husband is not very nice," said Theo. "I am very sorry for her."

"You have been very kind to her," said Mrs. Forester; "but she laughs a good deal; is she really so miserable?"

"Oh, she is young; she must laugh sometimes. I have tried to comfort her. I have told her that I shall be there too, and that I will try to help her," said Theo gravely.

Mrs. Forester sighed.

"You will find a good many unhappy women there," she said; "the men are not a nice set. And don't you know anybody—have you no friends at all out there? You won't like me to say it, it sounds cold and worldly, but you must not have that sort of people for your friends. I suppose, though, Mr. Fane has been there already, and he will know."

"Yes; but it can't be quite like England, can it?" said Theo gently.

"It will not be at all like England, my dear—the England you belong to. I am afraid, after a time, you won't like it very much. Are you likely to stay there long?"

"Oh yes, I think so, for a great many years," said Theo.

Mrs. Forester asked a few little questions, and Theo told her a great deal about herself, and Gerald, and their prospects as far as she knew them. She suddenly discovered that it was comforting to talk peacefully

under the stars to this kind woman, whose manner was so gentle and soft, and who seemed to understand all her feelings so well. For Mrs. Forester had a charming way of listening and of sympathising, when she had got over her first little shyness with a person she did not know. Every word that Theo said interested her more deeply in this girl, who was going out in such faith and confidence to a life she could not possibly realise, and trying to support other wayfarers as she went along. To think that she knew no one—absolutely no one—in that great, terrible continent! that everything depended for her on the arrangements of one young man—her lover, certainly, but did that ensure the perfect thoughtfulness needed by a romantic, refined girl like this? Mrs. Forester's heart was touched; all the feelings of a mother, so long buried under silent grief, woke up into life again as she sat beside Theo, and thought, "This might have been my child." At last, when they had talked for a long time, she laid her hand on Theo's, and said:

"My dear, when we reach Cape Town you must let me take you to my house. You must belong to me till I give you up to Mr. Fane."

"Oh, thank you! What makes you so good to me?" said Theo, and, with a sudden impulse, she stooped and touched Mrs. Forester's pretty, soft hand with her lips. "But he may have arranged something already," she added, hesitating and blushing.

"He is not likely to have made a better arrangement than mine," said Mrs. Forester.

The next morning they anchored off Madeira, and Theo went ashore with the Foresters and some of their friends. She was quite happy now; the sadness, the regrets, the anxieties of England were fading in the distance, and Gerald was waiting for her not so very far off, in a country, perhaps, as beautiful as this, where the sun shone everlastingly, and the brown-faced people laughed gaily, and flowers that she had never dreamed of grew in glorious gardens, green paradises among the ridges of red rock. Colonel Forester was charmed with her enthusiasm. The blue sea danced and sparkled, rocking the little red and green boats that darted over it; the brown divers, with their white teeth and flashing eyes, splashed, and laughed, and screamed about the ship in a storm of silver spray. On shore the waves

broke gently at the foot of great brown rocks, garlanded above with green and scarlet. The narrow, stony streets, with their deep black shadows and brilliant lights, the market loaded with fruit, the dark-eyed people, with their bright handkerchiefs, made Theo think of Italy. She stayed on shore all day, and Colonel Forester went about with her everywhere, showing her his favourite views. One was only more enchanting than another.

It seemed strange to be off again, but Theo was much happier after that landing at Madeira. Her kindness to Mrs. Lee was not at all affected by her new friendship with Mrs. Forester, who had entirely taken possession of her now. It was a new thing in Theo's life to have a woman like this for her friend, who had been trained by trouble, who knew the world without being worldly, and whose warm, affectionate, unselfish nature was made strong and beautiful by religion. In those long days and evenings they had many talks, and Mrs. Forester soon knew all Theo's history, and, suspecting that Gerald Fane was not quite her equal, thought of giving her up to him with pain.

And so they sailed on, past Teneriffe, half-hidden in clouds, over a sea brilliant by day, and crowded with flying-fish; phosphorescent at night under the moon and the deep blue sky. They went on shore again at St. Helena, and climbed about the stern old rock till they were tired.

After that Cape Town seemed to be very near, and the old dreaminess came over Theo again. She roused herself, however, and spent more time than ever in comforting Mrs. Lee, whose husband had proved more and more on the voyage what a worthless fellow he was. This poor little thing dreaded the future so much, that she could not speak of it without tears. Theo tried hard to make her look on the bright side of things, listening patiently to her complaints, and promising to be her friend always; and Mrs. Forester could not remonstrate any more.

As the days went on, she and her husband became more and more anxious to see Gerald Fane, and to convince themselves that he would make his wife happy. They both doubted it, they could hardly tell why, for Theo's confidence in him was as deep as her love. She was almost silent on the subject, but Mrs. Forester knew that very well.

"The impudence, though, of asking a

girl like that to go to the Fields!" was Colonel Forester's constant theme.

"I would have gone there with you, Arthur," said his wife.

"You would not have been allowed, my dear," said the Colonel. "Women like you and Miss Meynell are very generous creatures, and their goodness ought not to be taken advantage of."

"When you were young," said Mrs. Forester, "I suspect you would have been of a different opinion."

"Never," said the Colonel. "I was never so conceited, to begin with. I never thought you would feel hardships and discomforts less because you were married to me."

Mrs. Forester laughed.

"I don't suppose I should," said she. "Miss Meynell is made of finer stuff. She will bear anything for the sake of that young man. Her courage won't fail."

"Her health will, and her spirit, too, in time," said the Colonel. "I can't bear the thought of that young man."

At last the Twelve Apostles rose out of the sea, and Table Mountain, dark and stern, and a white town lying under the hills, and docks, and masts, and trees, all in the clear brilliant air of a southern morning. It was very early when they entered the docks, and the sun shone on Theo's first sight of her new country. She and Mrs. Forester were standing on deck in all the confusion, wrapped in shawls, for the morning was cold; in that part of the world it was spring.

Theo's eyes were fixed on the long road beyond the docks, crowded with Malay carts, and with people of every complexion, dressed in all sorts of gay colours. Though she looked, she did not see much; she was dreaming, hardly realising that this was Cape Town, hardly expecting, in spite of all, really to see Gerald.

Mrs. Forester was looking for him in a much more wakeful fashion. It was she, not Theo, who saw a tall young man come on board, and make his way quietly through the crowd on deck, and approach them gently, with his eyes fixed on Theo, who did not see him.

It was indeed the story of the Sleeping Beauty, telling itself over again, as all the old stories do. There she stood, statue-like and still, cold, absent, quiet, and a little sad, as she gazed straight before her.

Mrs. Forester was just going to touch her, and to point out Gerald, who was within a few yards of them now, but he

came up too quickly at last, and stood suddenly between Theo and her dreams, as he used in the early days of their acquaintance.

All the absence and the vagueness were gone then. Mrs. Forester just caught the one quick glance that she gave Gerald, and the sudden flush and softening that came into her face, and then left them together, and turned away to her husband, who came up to her just then. She was laughing, and her eyes were full of tears.

"By Jove! Fanny," muttered the Colonel, "you were never so glad to see me!"

She took no notice of this accusation.

"He is a dear fellow, but not very strong," she whispered. "But I like him extremely. Oh, Arthur, they can't go to the Fields."

"And you really are actually come!" said Gerald, standing by Theo, and looking down into her happy face.

"Didn't you know?" she said in a low voice.

"Did I? Well, ever since I wrote to you, I've known how awfully selfish I was. But it's all right now. You won't be sorry that you came?"

"Gerald!" she said, with the faintest shade of reproach and sadness; and there was no more time to talk then.

For Combe joined her mistress, and Mrs. Lee struggled up to say good-bye, and giggled horribly in Gerald's face, and then Theo remembered that she must introduce him to the Foresters, and, in all the confusion of going on shore, the impatient fellow began to think that he would never have her to himself after all.

OUR SHINING RIVER.

V.

THE dews of summer night did fall,
The moon (sweet regent of the sky)
Silver'd the walls of Cumnor Hall,
And many an oak that grew thereby.

These lines, from the old ballad, rang in my ears as I breasted the steep hill, along which the white, dusty road wound up to the village of Cumnor. The moon was there, rising behind the hill, her silvery disc showing pale and wan in the ruddy glare of the sunset, while clumps and avenues of tall elms, in soft, bold masses against the evening sky, seemed to herald the sight of some lordly dwelling.

Full many a traveller oft hath sighed,
And pensive wept the Countess' fall,
As, wand'ring onward, they've espied
The haunted towers of Cumnor Hall.

But the next turn of the road shows that the trees surround an empty, desolate site. The turf grows over the foundations of the haunted towers; the garden terraces are still to be traced; the last remains of the pleasure where Amy Robsart whiled away the sad hours of her last summer—the sentiment of the spot lingers about it still, with all its gloom and mystery still unrevealed. A somewhat solemn site, sloping down towards the setting sun, with trees about it, and over the trees the tower of Cumnor Church, solemn, too, and reposeful in the glow of parting day.

Quite in character with the scene is the lonely inn on the opposite side of the highway—an ancient house with curiously carved window-beams and doorway—that must have stood there long before Amy Robsart's time, when Cumnor Place was the country seat of the lordly abbots of Abingdon. The fresh, pleasant breeze on the hill whispers how long ago, when cloister and town were baking in the hot sunshine of the long summer days, the abbot and the dignitaries of his abbey took refuge here from the sultry heat, and paced those terraced walks. And here, probably, lived the steward, in this house whose sign suggests the memories of later and more stirring times. For this little inn, placid and quiet in the heart of this silent country, bears the cognisance of The Bear and Ragged Staff—the badge of the Lords of Warwick and Leicester—and this is the one relic that remains of the hero of Kenilworth in connection with the scene.

But more to present purpose is the prospect of getting something to eat out of The Bear and Ragged Staff. Imagination had suggested a pleasant evening meal in the shades of Cumnor, at the worst a cold chicken or the universal ham and eggs. But the landlord shakes his head. A cool mug of ale and a crust of bread-and-cheese were all that modern Cumnor could afford. The old kitchen, where once blazed a hospitable hearth, is now set out with ale and cider barrels in long array; and instead of the old oak parlour we have a bare, whitewashed room surrounded by creaking, crazy settees. And here the nightly village council is being held; the men have dropped in on their way home from work: the mason with his wrinkled, crinkled face; the easy-going carpenter with his long whiskers, where the shavings have stuck; and all round a row of farm-hands of various kinds, but all of the one rather

peculiar type, small-featured, but aquiline, with hairless, terra-cotta faces, and mouths that might have been cut with a knife in the tightly-drawn skin. Weary, placid, silent, is this crowd of witnesses in smock-frocks and leather gaiters, motionless as so many carved, wooden effigies, but not unobservant, and even at some village witticism from the more sprightly artisan, the wooden figures show signs of life, the beards wag all—or the chins where the beards should be—a short, hoarse laugh goes round, and then the machinery stops, the figures are all motionless once more.

But the landlord, having placed a portion of bread-and-cheese before the new arrival, takes his accustomed seat as the permanent president of the assembly, the first among equals, with his back to the chimney, over which is a brightly-coloured print representing an Atlantic steamer of the Allan line gallily ploughing its way across the ocean, Westward ho! There are other advertisements of emigrant-steamers on the walls suggestive to the weary head of the promised land over the westward seas, divided from him by the insurmountable barrier of a want of pence.

A solemn silence reigns for a time in the room, where a twilight gloom has commenced, while the landscape without is still suffused with rosy light. Then the new comer attracts attention by consulting a pocket-map to make sure of his future course.

"Niver-could make out," remarks a countryman, casting his eyes to the ceiling as if to address some invisible cherub there aloft; "niver could make out how folk can find their way along by thic things they call maapa."

"That kind of scholarship's beyond me," says another countryman, shaking his head, and then, as if startled at the sound of his own voice, concealing his countenance behind a mug of ale.

"It's easy enough for a scholar, I tell ye;" this spoke the mason with an air of suppressed knowledge. "I could have done it myself with practice."

"Ah, I've always heard tell how you were a good scholar, Master Ashlar," rejoined the other.

"Oh, that be nothing," pursued the mason with a gloomy mien. "There be nothing in being a self-taught scholar nowadays. There be no encouragement for such. Ah, the hours I've spent over my book! Tell you what, mates," rather

fiercely; "if I'd my time to come over again, I'd niver touch a book—niver look inside one."

"Well, there ain't much advantage in it if it comes to that," said the landlord soothingly.

"Advantage!" repeated Master Ashlar scornfully. "Why, I tell ye I've read all about the old history of this place in a book called Kenilworth."

"Ah, there be a kind of story about this place I've heard tell. Some kind of lord lived here once, they do say——"

"Ees," interposed the landlord. "Why, there's many people come here just to see the place. Though there's net much to see to my fancy."

But the mouths of the country-people once opened on the subject there was a good deal to be told. One man, whose grandfather had lived in this very house, had heard him talk of the fine house that once stood in front of these windows; the fields about were still called the Park—a pond close by was known as the fish-pond; and the well that supplied the house was still in existence.

"Ah, I should like to have the digging of them fields twice over," suggested a jobbing man, who seemed to intimate that he knew more about the matter than he chose to mention, and there was a general drawing of the breath on the part of those present, as if in awe at the dim suggestion of pots of gold lying there below the surface.

After all, there was something ghostly and suggestive in the aspect of the deserted site and the gloomy trees about it. You might fancy the light robe of a woman flitting along those neglected terraces; and there is the church just above—all unchanged—where the deserted wife must often have sought relief from her misery in prayer.

"A good, virtuous gentlewoman," said Lady Dudley's waiting-maid, "who did dearlie love her. 'A good, virtuous gentlewoman, and danielie would pray upon her knees, and divers times she saith that she hath harde her prairie to God to deliver her from Disperaconne.'"

Was it this desperation long prayed against in vain that drove the poor woman at last to her end? Who can say? Sir Walter Scott is wildly wide of the mark, even allowing for the exigencies of fiction. But the real story is perhaps even more dark and tragic than the fictitious.

Anyhow, the gloom that gathered about

Cumnor Church seemed quite abnormal in intensity, especially about the western tower under the shadow of the trees that overhang the place. Here are the last traces of the old building, the core of an archway deeply sunk in the soil—once a gateway, probably, that led from the house to the venerable Norman doorway—the western entrance of the church. A subdued light gleamed through the lofty clerestory windows. It is a handsome, well-proportioned little church, standing high above the village, with the parsonage just below, all over-shadowed by trees. Some bird of the night wheels past the old tower, and just then the bell tolls out with solemn cadence, again recalling the old ballad :

The death-bell thrice was heard to ring,
An aerial voice was heard to call,
And thrice the raven flapp'd his wing,
Around the towers of Cumnor Hall.

The church was open, and there was light within, for a young man was there with a lamp, busily engaged in making arrangements for some coming service, the whole interior being kept in fresh and dainty order; and by the fitful light we can make out in the chancel the handsome altar-tomb of Sir Anthony Forster, one of the chief actors in the Robsart tragedy, with brasses of the knight and his dame kneeling face to face, with a small group of children in the rear. A grave, thoughtful face is that of the knight, disturbed by no remorse or dread. The three bugle-horns in his arms, repeated in different parts of the monument, represent the origin of his family and their surname, as King's Foresters, that is, in the then not distant past. But no good came to the knight from the possession of the old manor-house of the abbots of Abingdon; he saw his children all die before him, and in his will he left Cumnor Place to his staunch friend and patron, the Earl of Leicester. A singular bequest in any case, but still more strange if we credit the commonly-received, or what we may call the Waverley version of the tragic mystery of Cumnor, and believe that the Earl himself had given the order for his wife's murder.

But the young man who looks after the church, and who is excellently well-informed as to its history, does not consider that the tomb of Sir Anthony exhausts the interest of the church. There in the south transept is the chapel which the abbots of Abingdon reared for their own tomb-house, and here they sleep, still undisturbed, in the vault

below. The young man here taps the stone floor with his heel, and the stones give back a hollow, resonant murmur.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight, as I turn resolutely on the way to Oxford—a wide and pleasant landscape, with glimpses of far distant hills. The distance cannot be great, and yet the way seems to lengthen out marvellously, and the moon is well up in the sky before I catch sight of the twinkling lights of Oxford, and the many spires of her colleges and churches, whitened by the silvery moonbeams. But there was still a flat and rather depressing patch of country to be crossed, intersected by channels and watercourses, before the cheerful lights and brilliant shops of the High Street dissipated all thoughts of doleful Cumnor.

Here was Oxford under a new aspect, the undergraduates all gone down, and the academical replaced by the military element, the militia marching through the streets to the strains of the band, and military gossip replacing the language of the schools in the coffee-room of The Mitre. Charlwood had been there and had ordered dinner, it was satisfactory to learn. And then, with a saunter up the High Street, the moonlight making strange, fantastic light and shade among the roofs and gables of the mediæval buildings, and with a glance at Magdalen Bridge, and the sweet, solemn Magdalen Tower, the time of waiting came to an end. Charlwood was smoking in the porch as I came up, and greeted me heartily. His news would keep till after dinner, he said, and against this I had nothing to say.

As we were sitting down to dinner I noticed a stout and very rosy gentleman, who occupied a little table to himself, and was spreading his dinner-napkin over his knees with a rather disconsolate air.

"You ought to know that old fellow," I said to Charley. "He knows your uncle, anyhow."

For I had recognised the occupant of the waggonette, who had driven past Charlwood Hall the day before.

"No—I think not," said Charley, sticking up his eye-glass in a supercilious way. But Mr. Boothby had seen our glances in his direction, and rose and approached our table.

"Now you young gentlemen were thinking of asking me to join your party, only you were a little shy. But, hang it, I'm not going to dine by myself if I can help

it. Waiter, lay my cover at these gentlemen's table."

Charlwood was looking all kinds of outraged dignity at the intruder, when suddenly his face relaxed and his eye-glass dropped.

"Must be old Boothby by his cheek," he said. "How are you, old boy? How's the bird's-eye and the shag?"

"Tush, tush!" cried Mr. Boothby with his jolly laugh; "I haven't got any samples with me now. Junior partner travels now while I take my pleasure. But I can't quite make you out. One of those jolly young Oxford chaps I used to meet a few years ago. Extraordinary! Well, never mind, since we're all friends. Waiter, are you going to bring that soup now?"

Charley had given me a nudge, warning me not to refresh Mr. Boothby's memory prematurely, and the pair were soon in animated talk, Charley falling in wonderfully with the old gentleman's humour, and making him laugh till the room rang again. Mr. Boothby had talked of his joining our party, but in reality we had joined his, and a hospitable amphitryon he proved, calling for this wine and the other till we had a regular battery of bottles and glasses about us. It was a battery that began to tell upon Charley, who, really worried and anxious as I could see, gave way to rather boisterous merriment and was evidently prepared to drown his cares in wine.

In the midst of our banquet the door opened, and two more guests presented themselves, and I recognised at once Mr. Thomas, formerly of The Crab and Flowerpot, and his son Albert. Now the former had not been able quite to get rid of his deferential landlord-like bearing, and while he attempted to enter the room with the air of a gentleman at large, there was a subdued kind of tone about him, as of one more accustomed to take orders than to give them. As he approached our table Mr. Boothby eyed him with the same sort of supercilious glance that Charley had employed on his behoof not long before.

"Friend of yours?" asked Mr. Boothby, turning to me, whom he regarded as a quiet, insignificant kind of person evidently.

"No, hang it!" cried Charley, turning a little pale. "A friend of mine. I say, Thomas," addressing his proposed father-in-law, "I'm dining with friends. Can't you leave me alone?"

"Come, come, Mr. Pycroft," said

Thomas in a deprecatory manner; "don't cut up rough, Mr. P."

At the name Pycroft Mr. Boothby banged his fist upon the table.

"What, young Charlwood Pycroft?" he exclaimed. "My goodness! Extraordinary!"

"Ah, I know your face, too, sir," said Thomas, sliding into a chair. "Sit down, Albert," to his son; "we'll have a glass of wine with these gentlemen."

Meantime Mr. Boothby had been regarding Mr. Thomas fixedly.

"I have it now," he cried at last. "Crab and Flowerpot! Many a jolly day I've had there. Know my face—yes, I dare say, and my back too, for you've stood behind my chair often enough at those big dinners."

"Yes, I dare say, Mr. Boothby," rejoined Mr. Thomas with an uneasy smile, "and many a good order I've given you—Virginny, bird's-eye, and best shag."

"So you have, old fellow," cried Boothby with his accustomed roar; "many thanks for past favours. Well, you'll wine with us now. Waiter! Another bottle of Heidaick. But Pycroft! why, I've been connected with the Pycrofts for years. Ain't I trustee for your cousin under old Charlwood's will? Charlwood made his money in Bristol! Now, waiter, where's that champagne?" And then, as the waiter placed the bottle upon the table, "Clean glasses! For, gentlemen," turning to the rest of us, "like Mrs. Gamp, I'm going to propogate a toast. Somebody you know, Mr. Pycroft—ah! Sly dog!"

"I think not," said Charlwood, rising. "I don't think a public room is the place for this kind of fun. I'll leave you to your wine, for I've had quite enough, and I've got business to talk over with Mr. Penrice."

A sudden silence fell upon the party as we left the room. No doubt they were offended at our behaviour, but there was no particular reason why I should care about that, and Charlwood seemed quite reckless as to consequences.

"Isn't it abominable!" he cried, as we walked up and down the High Street in front of the hotel, smoking and trying to keep cool. "There is this fellow Thomas following me about like a shadow. I can't have a quiet evening with you to talk over my scrape but he must follow and poke in his disagreeable face."

I suggested that this was annoying, but, after all, Charlwood had brought it on

himself, and then why had he run away from his pleasant party on the river?

"Well, you know," replied Charlwood, "I couldn't stand the old fellow's impudence. Somehow or other he had heard of my uncle's people coming down the river, and he insisted that I should introduce them, bring them to join the Thomases on the river. And when I told him I could not think of such a thing, he informed me that he was not at all afraid of Squire Pycroft, that he had the old gentleman in a cleft-stick, and that he looked forward to a double wedding—mine, don't you see, and his son Albert, that young cub—to whom do you think?—to my cousin Claudia."

Of course I had heard something of all this before, but I did not see the full enormity of the thing till now. That this Albert, this cub—for he was a cub; Pycroft was quite right there—should dare to raise his eyes to Claudia—to my Claudia as I had begun to call her in my own heart, it was a thing not to be endured, and I fully sympathised with Charley in his wrath.

"I thought you'd see it like that, old chap," said Charley. "Well, I've almost made up my mind that I will cut the whole lot of them, go back to my uncle, partake of the fatted calf, and marry Claudia. Of course, we shall have to smart handsomely to the Thomases, but the old boy can stand that, I should think."

Charlwood's audacity almost took away my breath. And Rebecca, the girl who loved him and trusted him, was she to be thrown aside like an old glove? But that was no affair of mine; Rebecca had her father and her brother to champion her, while I was bound by my friendship for Charley, and by my implied promise to Mrs. Pycroft to lead him in the way that would be the best for his own and the family interests. Well, here he was in the most satisfactory mood for that purpose. In his present temper I might take him this very night to join the family circle at Stanton Harcourt. He would be received with joy by the elders, no doubt, and Claudia—well, Claudia was too young and inexperienced to withstand the family sentiment. She liked her cousin well enough, and if I had made the least impression upon that unruffled bosom, that impression would be faint and evanescent, no doubt. Claudia would repine a little at the sudden cutting short of her longed-for expedition, for the Pycrofts would

hardly venture to run the gauntlet of the vengeful Thomases, and indeed, the real motive for the journey would have been satisfied, and they would all return to Charlwood Hall to issue invitations, and set the bells a ringing for the bridal.

As things were hanging thus in the balance, some people approached the door of the hotel—two girls, and a clerical personage in a long black cloak, who was escorting them. These girls were Boothby's daughters, and the whole party were chattering away merrily.

"You'll come in and see papa?" said one of the girls, as they approached the steps.

"No, not to-night," said the cleric, who seemed to be some college don. "I'll call for you soon after breakfast."

"But here is papa!" cried one of the girls; and sure enough Mr. Boothby came staggering to the door, lifting his hat, and gasping as if for fresh air.

He had taken a good deal of wine, no doubt, but he seemed to be a man who could take a good deal without showing it, and certainly his disordered looks were not the result of intoxication. The girls cried out in alarm:

"Oh, papa! What is the matter?" and he looked at them in a dazed way, as if he hardly knew them.

"Nothing—nothing's the matter," he gasped at last. "No, there's no bad news, no telegrams. No; go to bed, girls," crossly enough. "I've had a bit of a shock, but nothing you're concerned with. Go to bed, girls."

Mr. Boothby stood for a while, supporting himself by the pillar of the porch, a sort of vinous Samson deprived of his strength and in bondage among the Philistines. But the air seemed to revive him, and, after passing his handkerchief across his brow several times, and wiping his lips, which seemed dry and parched, he resumed some of his free and jovial bearing.

"Sold it all," he soliloquised, quite unconscious of our neighbourhood. "Sold it all! Then where the deuce is the money?" and with that he turned and walked into the house.

Hardly had Mr. Boothby disappeared when Mr. Thomas took his place. Not in the least disconcerted he, but apparently in high good-humour, with a satisfied smile on his thin lips. He did not indulge in any soliloquy, and, with sharper eyes than Mr. Boothby, at once made us out—Charley and me—as we stood still smoking in the pathway.

"I want you young fellows," he said. "We're all stopping here for the night, I suppose. Come upstairs and have your café with us, or a drop of sperrit-and-water. I've had a nice long chat with your friend, and he's enlightened me on one or two p'int, and, ecod! I think I've enlightened him!"

Mr. Thomas chuckled maliciously over this, and seemed altogether so knowing and confident that Charley was quite overpowered.

"We had better go," he muttered; and we followed Thomas upstairs.

"Now, you go in first, captain," said Mr. Thomas, opening the door of a sitting-room.

And there stood Rebecca, as charming as can be conceived, in an evening-dress, with some beautiful black lace wound about her handsome shoulders.

"Oh, Charley, you have come back!" she cried, holding out her arms with such love and joy in her eyes that Charley would have had the feelings of a stockfish if he could have refrained from running forward and clasping her in his arms.

Mr. Thomas shut the door upon the lovers.

"You and I will go and have a drink in the bar, Mr. Penrice. He ain't a bad-intentioned fellow, ain't the captain; but weak—decidedly weak. Well, it's a good thing he's got friends to look after him now and keep him steady."

Mr. Thomas tried his best that evening to find out whereabouts the Pycrofts and Claudia were likely to be on the morrow; but he failed to extract any information from me.

I was quite determined now that the two parties should not meet if it were possible to prevent it. If that cub should join us, and try to make himself agreeable to Claudia, I felt that some mischief would be done. A misgiving, too, suggested itself whether Mr. Thomas's boast that he had a hold upon the Pycroft family were not the expression of a sober truth. The man had the courage and endurance of an old rat, and the tender brood of Pycrofts would have a poor chance with him were he fairly loosed upon them. But surely we could get our little skiff laid up in some creek or backwater when the Thomases' flotilla approached, when, all unseen by those to whom the sight would be painful, Cleopatra and her Antony might sail by in triumph in their gilded barge.

A CRUISE IN THE MOZAMBIQUE.

IN THREE PARTS. PART I.

SIMON'S BAY, Cape of Good Hope, is too well known to need description; it is said to be the healthiest place in the world, and, barring the great frequency of south-easters, the climate is nearly perfect. We slipped our moorings in the ship, that for some months to come was to be my home, soon after daybreak. The hills were veiled with rosy, misty vapour, much enhancing the charms of their somewhat bleak contour, and Simon's Berg still slumbered under its soft white nightcap. Passing through the anchorage so snug and sheltered, the flag-ship on one hand, the old coal-dépôt on the other, the outlines of the sleeping town soon melted away into uncertainty. Very peaceful on the slope of the mountain lay the dead, their white headstones just glinting in the newly-risen day. Then we glided by Newlands—where once a palace stood, the home of the superintendent of the H. E. I. C. when that great company wielded a power equal to that of many nations—Oatlands; Rocklands, with its grove of silver-trees (*Leucadendron Argentium*) glistening with burnished light; and, lastly, Miller's Point, once a great whaling-station, as evidenced by fences, door-posts, and harbours all formed of whales' jaws and bones. They must have been of a gigantic species, judging from the remains, but a whale in False Bay is now almost unknown. Here cultivation ends, and even the morning tints which so beautify the face of even the most sterile spots fail to render the landscape lovely.

Going out of Simon's Bay one is struck with the arid and sandy appearance of the Hottentot Holland, and Hangklip range on the one hand, and Cape Point on the other, but a vast tract of sea and wind rolls up from the South Pole, passing over no land to temper its saltiness, till it strikes these shores, and prevents any growth till the sheltered valleys wrap round and foster the first green leaves; and so vegetation creeps on, increasing in verdure till the vine and the orange clothe all the fertile valleys, and the "little hills rejoice."

Sea-sickness prevented my having any eyes for the beauties of Nature, soon after passing the two dangerous outlying rocks known as the Bellows and Anvil, and after that for three days, till in the latitude of Algoa Bay, though not within sight, multitudes of Cape-pigeons and stormy petrels skimming the foaming waters were the

harbingers of one of the gales which are so common and so dangerous off the stormy Cape. It almost always is blowing hard—I speak with experience, having rounded it seven times. Bad weather comes on so suddenly as to give very little warning. Mariners, who study the glass, observe that if it falls, and heavy, dark clouds gather in the west, “dirt” may be immediately expected, notwithstanding that the wind may be easterly, and the sky clear overhead. Vessels have sometimes barely time to take in sail, before they are taken aback from the north-west, and a heavy gale begins.

It was soon after leaving Algoa Bay for Simon's Bay that Her Majesty's ship *Nerbudda*, a fine brig of four hundred and eighty tons, disappeared off the face of the sea in 1855—one of those happily rare and sorrowful instances of a man-of-war, well-found, well officered and manned, suddenly disappearing, and the sea never after giving up a spar or a plank which could have been supposed to belong to her. It was blowing a hard, fresh wind from the south-east as the *Nerbudda* and two merchant-vessels—the barque *Countess of Eglintoun* and the brig *Baron of Bramber*—beat out of Algoa Bay. Sea and wind increased as they got farther off the land, till, about four o'clock in the afternoon, it suddenly chopped round to the north-west, in a violent gust of wind and rain. A steep wall of sea rolled at them, sweeping the decks, carrying away deck-cabins and galleys, and washing many men overboard. They lay in the trough of the sea, dismasted and nearly unmanageable, for several hours. When able to breathe again, and to look round at their companions in misfortune, the *Nerbudda* was nowhere to be seen. When examined by order of the commodore at Simon's Bay, where these vessels put in, disabled and crippled, the captains and officers of both ships agreed that the *Nerbudda* was in company, about two miles to windward of them, at the moment they were struck, and that they never saw her afterwards. I have a picture of her now. She was an exceedingly taunt brig, built of teak at Moulmein, with a large area of sail. It seems, therefore, as certain as anything can be, when no living eye saw her go down, that she must have been taken aback, and “pooped.” She would, therefore, have been forced down stern foremost, all standing, which would account for one of her boats or spars ever having been picked up. She is probably sitting

upright at the bottom of the sea, where it is quiet and still, and no gales agitate the deep waters, with all her sails set—a fearsome sight could mortal eyes behold it. Week after week, month after month, until it grew into years, we looked for her coming into Simon's Bay, where her captain and crew had so many friends. Vessels were sent to St. Augustine's Bay, Madagascar, against which coast the current from Agulhas sets. Prince Edward's Island and the Crozets, both desolate islands, were searched; but she was never heard of more, and now that so many years have passed, until the sea gives up her dead her fate will never be known. She was one of the three brigs who were all “lost” near about the same time—*Camilla* in China, *Sappho* on the voyage from Simon's Bay to Australia, *Nerbudda* off the Cape. Nobody has ever been satisfied as to the fate of the *Sappho*—whether she went down off the Cape, whether an iceberg struck her, or whether the shadowy report was true, that, one beautiful night, in Bass's Straits, close to King's Island, a passing vessel saw a man-of-war brig, under all sail, and heard the hammocks piped down, and the voice of the commanding officer, about the time she should have been due at Melbourne. Like the *Nerbudda*, the *Sappho* was watched for and searched for, but nothing more than this has ever been heard of her.

Leaving the Agulhas bank, bound, as we were, to the Mauritius, we sailed southward till the weather grew very cold. Much of my time, when I happened not to be ill, was passed on the bridge watching the enormous size of the waves, and the pretty sea-birds that hovered round us. In the latitude of the Great Fish River, weather approaching to a hurricane burst upon us. The sun went down like a ball of sulphur-coloured fire, night closing in upon a sky black as ink; barometer fast falling. By nine p.m. everything was furled, save the fore and main topsails, treble-reefed, and at last lowered on the cap. I went on deck about midnight, and a grand scene it was. The inky sky, the foaming, roaring sea, all lit up with almost a continual sheet of lightning, showing the little rag of sail and the outline of masts and rigging, as clear as the day. Had I been by myself, standing on the wet deck, surrounded by the wind's fierce howling, I should have been almost dead with fright; but I had a fearless heart and strong arm by my side;

so I looked on till, shivering with cold, I went to bed. Let no one imagine to sleep, however; that was a boon that fled away to some other regions far away. Everything in the ship must have fetched away, owing to our violent pitching and rolling, even the pivot gun overhead, and principally the first lieutenant, who was supposed to have pitched, into his water-jug, from which perilous position he was rescued by the sentry, legs uppermost. At least it sounded like all this; but my pretty rose water-jug, that has gone half round the world in safety, took its last cruise this night, flying out of its place, and lying in splinters under the bed. Then the table took charge, and smashed the bulkhead. It was a night long to be remembered. The storm over, albatrosses followed, and the midshipmen solaced themselves with attempts at catching them, not, however, with success. I was visited on the bridge by our kindly doctor, who proposed prussic-acid as a remedy for my perpetual sea-sickness. However, I declined cold poison yet a while; but I took to the lee-gangway, where I sat on a chair, and was pretty comfortable, though I got more than I liked of the "midshipman's curse"—the wind out of the mainsail.

Just as I am quietly resting in the cabin before going to bed, the officer of the watch, who appears always to be "Old" Giffard, bursts in with a great shout: "Fire and lights out, sir;" or, "Ship won't keep up to her course, sir;" causing me to jump up with my hair on end, supposing the ship is on fire, and something dreadful about to happen.

It was a lonely passage; we were like the ancient mariner, "alone on the wide, wide sea," four ships only having been seen since leaving the Cape.

When nearing Mauritius, after a run of twenty-four days, I was up before daylight to see the mountain-tops lift out of the sea, gilded by the beams of the rising sun. I felt quite light-hearted at sight of land after three weeks of perpetual sickness. The mountain-sides run down steep into the sea, with gorges and valleys bright with light green patches of sugar-cane. A remarkable set of little hillocks, called the "Cat and Kittens," shows out plainly as you near the island. A reef projects for some distance, the flat shore with a thin fringe of cocoa-nuts putting me much in mind of the Bolam shore at Sierra Leone. Steaming in, we passed the quarantine ship, opening the curious mountain called

the Pouce, or thumb, which it exactly resembles, and the still more remarkable Pieter-Botte, which is like a sugar-loaf with a head and neck. It seemed impossible that it could have been scaled, and yet Sir Henry Keppel ascended it when a lieutenant, besides a few other men at different times, apparently weary of life.

Our moorings were off Cooper's Island, close to the shore, and very convenient for landing. No sooner were we safely moored than numberless boats surrounded us, full of hospitable friends, anxious that we and the officers should stay with them. I certainly give the palm to Mauritius over all the countries of the world I have visited for kindest hospitality. The hotels of Port Louis must make but a scanty living in consequence. I slept very peacefully in that quiet harbour, after weeks of storm-tossing, the ship still and at rest, with a charming land-wind stealing in and out of the open port all night long.

Breakfast after a voyage is always a treat, and never so much enjoyed as when one has lived on milkless tea and other horrors for some time. I found a childish pleasure in pulling ashore in our handsome galley, with ensign and pendant flying, past lines of busy ships, all moored head and stern, to the landing-steps.

What a Babel of sounds met my ears! Chinamen, Lascars, and Coolies were vociferating, bellowing, and quarrelling with Mauritians, English, and Dutchmen, at the same time ceaselessly running along with a curious shamble, bearing huge bags of sugar on their backs to the ships alongside.

Port Louis is a very substantial-looking town, its government offices, merchants' houses, and banks being really handsome and well-kept buildings. The heat was intense, and a fine red sand powdered everything; very little shade was obtainable, and the long lines of square, white buildings fatigued the eye. Chartering a carriage, a lean Hindoo took possession of us, and proceeded to drive in a truly remarkable manner; he gesticulated, screamed, flung the reins at the horses' heads, and then caught them again very cleverly, and finally set off with a wild whoop, quite regardless of the legs and shins of the passers-by. On our way to R duit, the Governor's country-house, we had to go out several times, the horses refusing to go on, and threatening to jib and bolt down the long hill back into Port Louis. This catastrophe was only prevented by the

greatest diplomacy on the part of the driver, who adjured, threatened, and coaxed in turns, as if they had been reasoning creatures. "Scélérat, vaurien, vieux brigand!" were the mildest terms of reproach heaped upon the poor beasts when matters were going wrong. So on we went when the horses pleased, enveloped in rain and mist, and arriving in a moist and limp condition. A few quiet days spent in this most charming spot, with the kind and thoughtful Governor and his wife, soon set me up. Réduit is beautifully situated on a flat island, so to speak, inasmuch as it is surrounded by a deep, winding river, bridged over occasionally. The torrents have worn such deep beds for themselves, in all the ages of the world, that the sides are perfectly straight up and down, an occasional pavement over the smooth grey stones in the bed of the river and zigzag path up its sides forming, in the absence of bridges, the only connection with the other side. The rooms are large, airy, and cool, but a general dampness clings to everything, destructive of clothes, and productive of feverish attacks.

"Bon Air," another charming country-house, opened its hospitable doors to us, and situated in the Plaines Wilhelm district, is much dryer, but at the same time hotter. Like Réduit, it has a roaring river with several points, called "bout du monde," from which the silver streak, far down at the bottom of a ravine, looks like a mere thread. The house, a large one-storeyed building—the kitchen and servants' huts occupying a detached position—was a good sample of the flourishing Mauritian country-house, surrounded with a wide, partially-enclosed verandah. Hurricane-bars to the low windows reminded one that nature here was not always so smiling as we found it, but that there came a time when the winds raged like a wild beast trying to effect an entrance, and must be kept out by the strongest bolts and bars. Bon Air was filled with guests, and there was no room for us, but what did that matter? A small pavilion—i.e. two rooms on wheels—was brought from Port Louis at a few hours' notice, and wheeled alongside the verandah, a bed and a few other articles were soon produced, and were all that was necessary to make us most comfortable and independent. Night here was like fairyland, a grand moon sailing high in the sky showed all nature glorified and lit up by its pure beams; night, too, drew out the scent of flowers,

and we wandered through a leafy labyrinth, the air heavy and laden with the scent of vanilla, whose large, succulent, fleshy leaves climbed and clung to the larger trees, and hung over the path, its heavy pods drooping and opening as they ripened. The leaves much resemble those of the india-rubber plant. The Isle of France would appear to be its home, for, except at Seychelles, it flourishes nowhere so well, though very fine plants are produced at the Sandwich Islands. The crop must be a most profitable one, for they charged a shilling in Port Louis for each fine pod. Mosquitoes were a great torment underneath the net, and prevented sound sleep; but what a fresh dewy morning on which to awake, and wander, coffee-cup in hand, among the lovely scarlet leaves of the poinsettia, and the graceful, waving filahoe, retreating about eight to bathe—sometimes in an open-air bath—and breakfast in the cool inner room!

Burnside, on the plains of Pamplemousses, was far hotter and less verdant, though possessing a magnificent view of the Pieter-Bothe. Here, again, a charming little pavilion appeared, as if conjured up by Aladdin's lamp: two good-sized rooms of thin wood, with abundance of light, air, and draughts. The sky was certainly visible through all the chinks, and I only trusted it might not rain while we were there. A salute being proposed in my honour, some blackies, with long brands, fired the guns. They stood on tiptoe about three feet from the gun, and having clapped the lighted brand on the touch-hole, took to their heels and fled. The botanical gardens at Pamplemousses are well worth a visit, were it only to see the Madagascar lace fern, and to drink of the pure water spurting out of the traveller's tree, on an incision being made. Paul's and Virginia's tombs, one on each side of a dirty little stream, and extremely out of repair, were disappointing, and gave one no idea of their being genuine.

Sailing out of Port Louis with but the whisper of a breath of wind, we glided under a crowd of canvas, straight as an arrow into the outer harbour, where a breeze caught us, which we carried all the way to the Seychelles, making a splendid straight run of five days.

The Seychelle Islands, a numerous group of coral islands, with deep water passages between most of them, are dependencies of Mauritius, governed by a civil commissioner, and becoming year by year more important

as a coaling-station and sanatorium for the Mozambique Channel. It seems odd so to speak of a place nearly on the equator; but with the exception of cholera, which is sometimes epidemic, the climate is wonderfully renovating, being dryer than most tropical places; were the mountains of Seychelles a little higher, their tops would provide a nearly perfect climate. We went into the harbour of Port Victoria, Mahé, under sail, an intricate and risky passage, with coral reefs on each hand, so that having cleared one, we stood directly for the other, and as we approached that, altered course instantly for the next. Having wriggled under sail in this way into the confined little harbour, we let go in a space about twice the length of the ship, where people usually hesitate even to steam in without a pilot. We found the Lyra here, just from the Rovuma, whither she had taken poor Bishop Mackenzie. Both Livingstone and the bishop had left for the Zambesi again, finding only five feet in the Rovuma, not enough for the Pearl's draught. The captain told me that the good "bishop of the tribes," Mackenzie, having a simple-hearted idea that he must accustom himself to nautical evolutions as part of his mission of usefulness, used to practise going aloft in the Lyra, and on one occasion went on to the topsail-yard with the men, blowing fresh, and furling the sail. It must have been a sight, his tall, gaunt frame, with black gaiters and cassock, disporting on the yard. Good and excellent man, he had laid down to die on the pestilential marshes of the Zambesi about the time I heard of this characteristic action.

Mahé is the largest of the Seychelles group and the seat of government. The landing-place is on a semi-circular beach, a few houses and shops lining the shore. The civil commissioner's bungalow is charmingly perched on a small height above the town, surrounded and clothed with bowers of vanilla, lanes of cinnamon, betel-nut, and nutmeg, interspersed with palms and mandarin-oranges. From here a charming winding path, shaded with fruit-trees, which drooped over our heads entreating to be picked, led to the top of the highest spot in the island, Signal Hill, about one thousand one hundred feet. The reward of so much exertion was a lovely view of the quiet little harbour and town beneath, the reefs plainly defined, and the passage through which we wound our way in entering, curiously distinct.

Coming on shore on another occasion in the galley, and sailing over the coral-reefs with all the confidence in the world, we saw a boy standing in a few inches of water, fishing. I was not therefore wholly unprepared for bumping immediately, when the crew jumped out and waded beside the boat, carrying her over the sharper spikes of coral, till we could land on some rough stones.

A steep zigzag path, magnificently called the grande route—everything is very French here—took us to the top of the gorge overlooking North West Bay, at the other side of the island. Jack-fruit, pineapple, mango, and orange grow wild by the wayside; there was one ravine quite carpeted with pine-apples. Everything seems to flourish here as in Paradise, without the sweat of the brow. We dined luxuriously on rich turtle soup, fin of turtle with palm salad—the last a cruel luxury, for it is the crown of the young cocoanut, and, of course, is the death of the tree. In flavour it much resembles that of young filberts, and costs only one and sixpence. We went on shore at St. Anne's, the second in size of the group, scraping and bumping over the coral, and fishing up, on our return, some beautiful live coral with purple tips, and some fine neritas picked off the rocks. St. Anne's has a sharp peak, to which we climbed, standing among a dense grove of filahoe, nine hundred feet above the sea.

Leaving Mahé under sail for the neighbouring island of Praslin, we passed between La Digue and Félicité, two of the larger of the group, and stood into Curieuse Bay, so close to the shore that our jibboom almost touched the trees, anchoring in a beautiful little cove, shaded with palms. Next morning, leaving the ship before daylight, we pulled round the point, out of Curieuse Bay, passing Bat Island, a lovely wooded islet, and landed at Praslin on a fine sandy beach, fringed with cocoanuts. We were here met by M. Cauvin, a French gentleman, overseer for the owner of the vast cocoa de mer plantation in this island. We were most hospitably provided with an army of natives to accompany us into the palm woods, to bring down cocoa de mer and cabbage-palm for salads. One man acted as courier, four more went on ahead to cut nuts for us, and there was a litter to carry me up; the latter quite superfluous, as I had legs of my own fortunately. We wound round an excellently-kept mountain-path, through

groves of clove and mandarin orange, till the top of the hill was gained. There, beneath us, in a cool, shady gorge, was the largest plantation of the far-famed vegetable ivory, or cocoa de mer, in the world. The mass of them being the female, or nut-bearing tree, were of a stumpy, thick-set appearance, while here and there a male tree of immense height reared itself far above the rest, a straight, mast-like stem, with a graceful bunch of gigantic leaves at the top, and a flower pendent from it. But one leaf—or branch you may call so gigantic a growth—a year is produced; its age may therefore be told by the marks on the stem of the broken-off leaves. The tree is from twenty-five to forty years old before it comes into bearing; the nut, very large and heavy, is somewhat of a kidney shape, and takes seven years to ripen, when the vegetable-ivory inside is as hard as marble, and can be turned into cups, balls, etc. In making new plantations, the nut is planted when it has commenced to sprout downwards; it grows underground to a distance of about three feet, and then turns and shoots upwards, forming the tree. The nut may be left for thirty years, and if dug up then will be found quite sound. Some of the very best trees are two hundred years old. We tasted a young nut, but thought it decidedly nasty. The shell serves for dishes and water-bottles; the stout, stiff leaves, when ripe of a light lemon colour, are split into fine straw, and plaited for hats, but are rather heavy. The houses are thatched with the refuse leaves, and last a lifetime, the slow growth making them of remarkable toughness. Most thoroughly did we enjoy our expedition; so early, and among the dense shadow of gigantic trees, it was not too hot, though we were only four degrees south of the Line. Everything was new and full of strange attributes. We breakfasted, after our toil, at M. Cauvin's pleasant, cool, leafy house, wide-open to the air (though shut with jealous care during all the hot hours of the day), upon the fruits of the earth, much as Adam and Eve must have done; and our host joined us at dinner in the evening, full of freshest information on all subjects connected with his long life here, among the cocoas de mer, quite looking upon them as his children and grandchildren.

In the evening we ran over to Curieuse Bay in the galley. This is a Government establishment, under the charge of a

superintendent of lepers, the island being appropriated alone to lepers, from Mauritius, Roderiguez, and the Seychelles. We were met by the superintendent, who took one of our party to visit the poor wretches officially. There are but ten now alive, who have the whole beautiful island to themselves. The same fear and terror of these miserable human beings obtains now as in the olden time, when "Helon was a leper, and was driven forth from the haunts of men into the lone wilderness, to die." Only one comfort seemed to be granted to them—the society of their kind. Each one kept his or her coffin in his or her own hut. It would seem like an unnecessary aggravation of their distress; but it is their own desire, in consequence of one of them having once died too poor to purchase a coffin. It was an appalling sight, these ten miserable souls assembled for inspection. They suffer more from a form of elephantiasis than the Syrian leprosy; but it is quite as infectious, attacking the nose, fingers, and toes, and rotting them away like diseased wood. Added to this, they suffer from a chronic skin-disease, which is in the blood, and will only yield temporarily to remedies. One was thankful to shake the dust off one's feet on leaving this lovely island—far too beautiful and fertile a spot to be "a place of skulls," shunned by the whole world. The traveller's tree grows in Curieuse to an immense size, much resembling a gigantic banana. The water, spouting from it on making a gash with a knife, is mawkish to the taste, but extraordinarily cool and refreshing.

GOOD-BYE, SWEETHEART.

GOOD-BYE, sweetheart! The quaint old phrase
We jested at in olden days;
When Faith was fresh, and Hope was strong,
Before we knew that Love could wrong,
Or set our feet in Sorrow's ways.

Now we have learnt how Trust betrays;
And bitter doubts and terrors throng
The words half dear when all were young.
Good-bye, sweetheart!

Oh, soft refrain of idle song,
What memories lurk its notes among!
For us, no hope its pain allays.
With eyes all dim with boding haze,
Our faltering lips delay it long,
"Good-bye, sweetheart."

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

OUR MAN OF LAW.

THE dramatist who first evolved from his imagination the popular type of the stage attorney, an individual who, as far as my memory serves, is nearly always a

villain, certainly did not gather his materials from the study of Mr. Richard Merridew—Lawyer Merridew, everybody called him—the gentleman who did all the legal business worth doing in Shillingbury and in the neighbouring villages. The stage attorney is usually represented by a supple-backed, dodging, fidgety person, meagre in form, and clad in a suit of black broadcloth. He generally wears a high stove-pipe hat, and always carries a blue bag, which he holds between his knees when he wants to bring out of it a forged will, or a writ for the immediate arrest of the hero of the play.

Mr. Merridew was one of those men who seem to belong to the middle-aged period all through their lives. I cannot think of him as ever having been young, and in his later years he never appeared to me an old man. The fact is that men of the provinces, in the last generation, defied the assaults of time far more effectually than their descendants do nowadays, and far more effectually than dwellers in towns ever did. Uneventful careers, regular habits of life, pure air, and early hours kept them practically ten years younger than Londoners born in the same month. There was gout here and there, no doubt; but that was not to be wondered at, seeing that the old boys drank port, winter and summer. In Shillingbury there was a saying, however, that port, if it gave one complaint, cured ten.

Mr. Merridew lived a regular life even for a dweller in the country of that period. He drank no more port than was good for him, and what he did drink was so excellent in quality that he might have taken a very large quantity of it without any fear of gouty toes. At an early age he had fixed his style of dress and general toilette, and to this one style he adhered steadily all through his life. The cut of his whiskers was just the same in 1860 as in 1825. A pair of pepper-and-salt trousers, a tail-coat and waistcoat of broadcloth, a rather high neckcloth, collars of a fashion at present affected by personages in the highest walk of politics, and a pair of Wellington boots made up an attire which varied only in the substitution of a white waistcoat for the one of broadcloth, and of a checked linen cravat for the silk neckerchief, during the summer months. In the process of the suns, the natural man changed as little as was possible, and the man, as affected by the tailor's art, changed not at all.

Mr. Merridew lived in a house of a type which is the peculiar growth of an English provincial town, as truly as the British constitution is the outcome of the mingled inconsistencies and good sense of the average Englishman. You would never find a house the least like it anywhere else. It stood almost in the middle of the High Street, and if judged by the face it turned to the outer world, was certainly not a thing of beauty. It was very long and very low, and always looked as if it had just recently been treated to a fresh coat of stone-coloured paint. On entering by the street-door you had to descend two steps, and these brought you into a large square hall with another door in front. If you went through this, out into the garden beyond, you would see that Lawyer Merridew had made for himself as comfortable a dwelling-place as the heart of an Englishman need wish for. There were bay-windows to every room, and verandahs between them. Over bay-window, and verandah, and wall were trained roses, which in the summer would have qualified the house for a site by the side of Bende-meer, and mixed with the roses were wistaria and virginia-creepers, which in spring and autumn made the place all glorious with pale-blue blossom and foliage of rich deep red. In front of the house stretched a wide expanse of lawn, never profaned by the foot of the croquet-player, even when that game was at its zenith, and surely untouched by the more violent humours of lawn-tennis in these latter days. You might walk on this lawn if the weather were not too wet, or too dry, or if your boots were not too heavily nailed; but woe to you if you left a heel-mark of any sort behind you! I should have liked to see Mr. Merridew's face if anyone had proposed a game of tennis on the lawn on a wet day in July.

It was a common remark in Shillingbury that Lawyer Merridew knew everyone's business. It is true that Dr. Goldingham and he together might have compiled a manual of the family secrets of the town and district, from their joint experience, which would have been interesting reading. People are apt to tell the whole truth, or very nearly the whole truth about themselves and their troubles when they call in either the doctor or the lawyer, and at one time or another nearly everybody of mark in Shillingbury had been under the hands of one or other of our professional men. It would be too long to tell here all

the offices which Mr. Merridew filled. Local clerkships have become very numerous—shamefully numerous, the local ratepayer is wont to declare—under recent Acts of Parliament, and Mr. Merridew stepped into every clerkship as it was created, just as naturally as Irish patriots blossom into Commissioners and colonial Judges. Once a gentleman who could not make his way in London came down to Shillingbury and hired a house, putting on his front door a brass-plate which set forth that he was a solicitor and a commissioner for administering oaths in chancery. He was a pleasant man enough, and in private life people rather took to him, but the idea that any one should go to him for legal advice, when they could go to Lawyer Merridew, was too ridiculous. He had a certain sense of humour himself; and, having paid one year's rent and taxes without getting a shilling in the way of legal charges, he struck his tent and retired whither he had come. The neatness which reigned in Mr. Merridew's house and garden, was not wanting in the office. The law, as we all know, is a risky and a perilous thing, but if all the rest of the world had been as well ordered as Mr. Merridew's office, there would have been little need ever to call it into requisition. I remember I used to wonder as a youngster what could be inside those strong boxes marked "Folkshire Estate," "Hodgett's Exors.," or "Whitty's Trustees." The office ran down one side of the garden, and the clerks, as they sat at their work, had a much more pleasant outlook than ever greets the eye of the London scrivener. Mr. Merridew's own room was hung with rare old prints; and there, on shelves where one would naturally look for dusty bundles of deeds, were ranged some exquisite porcelain vases and bronze statuettes. Though he had such a pleasant sanctum, Mr. Merridew transacted much of his business in the open air. On market-days, when it was fine, he was always to be found opposite a particular window of The Black Bull, and whenever the West Folkshire Hounds might meet anywhere in the district, he would be sure to be at the coverside on his weight-carrying cob. Here, too, he worked off a good lot of appointments. Mr. Gillespie, Lord Folkshire's agent, would certainly have something to say to him, and there were many squires who, though they hunted in pink, were troubled with mortgages, and other landlord plagues, and liked to talk over these matters of

business with their legal adviser in the saddle better than when seated in the clients' chair in the Shillingbury office. Many of them no doubt would have done wisely to put down their stables, and keep out of the hunting-field; and Mr. Merridew, very likely, held this view also; but it was no part of his business to make it known to those most intimately concerned.

Though Mr. Merridew hunted pretty regularly, I doubt whether his heart was really in the sport; but if his allegiance to the "noble science" was a trifle forced, it was certainly given freely enough to partridge-shooting. Through September, October, and even in November, he would always manage to get two days a week. Few men enjoyed a day's shooting so much as he did, and small wonder. He knew all the pleasure and none of the troubles of a partridge manor. No need was there for him to hire an acre of land for his own sport. Could he have given the time he might have had four or five days a week over the ground of his many friends, for there was a keen competition always amongst the lesser squires and larger farmers to secure the lawyer for their shooting-parties. He was a good shot and a pleasant companion, and I fancy that the dinners which inevitably wound up a day's sport in our hospitable country would have been a trifle dull sometimes without Mr. Merridew, with his fund of ready talk and funny stories—stories which, be it remarked, did not seem to lose a particle of their interest through repetition. They wore well, and they recurred with the regularity of summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, but they never failed to command silence, or to provoke a laugh, though the audience knew well enough every turn of the narrative, and where the point would lie.

As long as we had our good doctor with us, he and Mr. Merridew were the closest friends, though they differed in every conceivable point as widely as two men could. Dr. Goldingham, with his mind trained by experiment, was for testing everything, and having tested, I am bound to say, he would nine times out of ten find the subject wanting, and pronounce for its radical reform or total abolition. Here was the spirit of progress. Mr. Merridew, on the other hand, nurtured on precedent, held that it was better to bear the ills we have than fly to others we know not of. Order, he would often assert in sententious tones, was Heaven's first decree: but I am

disposed to think that he gave this exalted place to order chiefly because its name was so commonly associated with that of law. Mr. Merridew, it is scarcely necessary to add, represented the spirit of true conservatism. I have often heard the two go at it hammer-and-tongs, fighting over again some old, well-thrashed question in the presence of our rector, the Rev. Francis Northborough. I am sorry to say such words of the deportment of divinity in the presence of law and physic; but when I have watched the smile of cold disdain that would come over the rector's handsome face as the others gave blow for blow, laying on with a will—disdain that men should allow themselves to be so deeply moved on a question which must for ever remain unsolved, I could but think that he might have sat as a study for that Roman Gallio, who "cared for none of these things."

I believe one great cause of Mr. Merridew's success lay in the fact that he completely eschewed the professional manner. If he might be giving advice as to what had better be done about a risky mortgage, or receiving instructions for a client's will, he would bear himself exactly the same as he would when discussing with a group of fox-hunting farmers what could have become of that fox last Tuesday at Broomsgate Hill, or explaining to Sir Thomas Kedgbury that he would never have any pheasants in the Blitherton coverts so long as Harry Sampson held the land adjoining. Our lawyer differed from Sir Thomas in politics; but as game of all sorts was dear to the hearts of each, they found here common ground for sympathy, and agreed that the poacher, in whatever station of life you might find him, was an enemy of the human race. Clients, country clients especially, will go to their legal adviser much more frequently, and will talk much more freely, when their legal adviser talks to them inside his office just the same as he talks in the market-place, when he gives no hint, by tone or demeanour, that the present interview will stand as an item in the future bill, with figures in all three columns too, if it should be unduly prolonged.

Confidence everywhere is a plant of slow growth, and in an English country town it grows very slowly indeed, therefore I hold that Mr. Richard Merridew must have possessed special gifts to have risen to the position he held in Shillingbury from his original start in life, for his was not one

of those old-established attorney's practices which one so often finds in England. He was himself the founder of his own business, and a very good business it was. In my grandfather's time, if anyone went to law and wanted assistance, he had no alternative between going over to Martlebury, to one of the lawyers of that city, and putting his case into the hands of a certain Lawyer Green, who was then the sole legal practitioner in Shillingbury. Lawyer Green I only knew by tradition, as he was gone to his account—and a very bad account it must have been if all I used to hear about him were true—before I was born. Stories of a man's eccentricity live long in a place like Shillingbury, and Lawyer Green was eccentric enough to have left behind him a vigorous tradition in a society where traditions faded much more rapidly than they did in our town. He lived alone in an old house just on the outskirts of Shillingbury, with no other servant beside an old woman who came for an hour or so in the morning and cooked what food he wanted for the day. A room at the end of the house, which abutted on the road, was used by him as an office. Here he received the few clients who came to trouble him, and here, so the story went, began and ended the knowledge of the outside world as to the interior of Lawyer Green's dwelling. Nobody, it was said, ever penetrated farther than this dingy little room, for the old woman did her cooking in an outhouse, and went away as soon as she had set out the rough food the old man ate upon a table in the corner of the office.

Naturally this seclusion on the part of Lawyer Green raised the curiosity of Shillingbury, and the most astonishing reports got abroad as to what the house contained, and what went on there in the midnight hours when all the well-conducted people of the town were asleep. Some said Lawyer Green kept a sort of dépôt for stolen goods, which were regularly forwarded to him from London by secret messengers. Others averred that he coined money there; others that he kept confined in the upper chambers a lot of unfortunates who had been found to stand in the way of their impatient next-of-kin, and had been consigned to his care as a sort of unofficial keeper of a madhouse. Some there were, indeed, who dissented from all the theories above-named, and held that the interior of the house was devoted by its owner to the

cultivation of "the black art," insinuating that Lawyer Green had made the usual compact with the Evil One. In the last century, when he began to practise, this belief in the frequent interchange of courtesies between gentlemen of the legal profession and the gentleman in black was widely diffused, so there is nothing to wonder at that it should have included Lawyer Green and his doings. None of the people who started these theories, however, would have cared to put them forward in the hearing of the person most concerned, for Lawyer Green's tongue was very sharp, and besides this he had let his neighbours see and feel that it was better not to rub his coat the wrong way. The old man was in fact a cunning usurer, who had got his paw upon more than one fair estate in the neighbourhood. He had also made himself the master of one or two very useful secrets as to certain defective titles to real estate, and several apparently well-to-do people rose up and lay down every day with the uncomfortable feeling upon them that Lawyer Green could bring their houses about their ears whenever he might wish to do so. When men like Mr. Green are in possession of secrets of this sort, they require, as a rule, pretty liberal treatment as to the conditions of their keeping silence, and our Mr. Green was no exception. Men like Mr. Green, too, are rarely popular, and in this respect he also followed the general rule. As to his motives for seclusion, these do not intimately concern us. He was a misanthrope and a miser, and people of that sort often prefer the room of their fellows to their company.

Lawyer Green's practice was not a very large or a very laborious one, but in spite of this there came a day when he found that he could not get along without help. Shillingbury was astonished at the news that Mr. Green had engaged a clerk, a young man, and a stranger, who lodged in the town, and went backwards and forwards to the office every day. This young man's name was Richard Merridew.

I have remarked more than once in the course of these sketches that people in Shillingbury held opinions on the subject of new comers strongly resembling those favoured by the ancient Romans, who, it is well known, used the same word in speaking of the stranger and of the foe, and Richard Merridew, coming as a stranger, and one, moreover, introduced to the town by Lawyer Green, was not looked upon

with friendly eyes. After he had been six months in Shillingbury, however, people grew less hostile, and there was a disposition to admit that, for a stranger, young Merridew was not a bad sort of fellow. Whether this softening of manners came from genuine charity, or from the fact that Merridew was a quiet, modest young fellow, perfectly agreeable always, but never pushing himself in the least, or from a desire to share any secrets of the master's way of life which the clerk might have fathomed, it is not for me to determine.

But before Richard Merridew had been two years in Shillingbury, his name and fame travelled far beyond the limits of his adopted home, and found a place in the press of the metropolis itself. Old Green, though he was now very infirm, would listen to no suggestion that any one should be with him in the house by night. One innovation, however, he did sanction. He had an extra key of the office-door made for the use of his clerk, so that he might let himself in on winter mornings, for bronchitis had already given the old man warning that he must be careful how he faced the raw early air. When this fact became generally known, the word went round that young Merridew must be a trustworthy fellow, otherwise old Green would never have given him the run of his office.

One winter's night Merridew sat down in his own lodgings to look over some papers which he had brought back with him from the office. As he went through them he found that a particular one had been left behind, and as he was anxious to finish the work in hand straight off, he put on his hat and coat, and set out to fetch the document which was wanting. The night was dark, and the wind was high and gusty. As he walked down the narrow lane to his employer's house he had some trouble to pick his way, well as he knew every step of the road. He entered the office silently, struck a light, found the paper he was in search of, and was just about to blow out the candle and depart, when behind the securely locked door which led into the house, he heard first a confused noise as of a scuffle mixed with faint mutterings. Then in the silence of the night there sounded a fearful shriek—such a shriek as can only come from a mortal in the direst extremity of terror.

Naturally he turned first to the inner door, but remembering how securely it was always fastened, he rushed out of the office

and ran down the narrow yard at the back of the house. Here, he remembered, there was a back door, and a little window always closely barricaded; perhaps he might find it easier to penetrate by one or other of these. As he groped along under the wall of the house he struck his head against something, and putting out his hand he felt that it was a ladder which stood against the wall of the house, and, dark as it was, he could see that it rested on the sill of the little window just alluded to. In a minute he was up the ladder, and finding the window unfastened, he stole into the house. All seemed silent again. He struck a match, and by its light found that he was standing half-way up the staircase. As the sounds he had heard were evidently below, he turned and went softly down in the direction of the room from which the terrible shriek had come.

Arrived at the bottom of the stairs, he stole towards that end of the house in which the office was situated, and after a few steps he saw a light shining through a half-opened door at the end of the passage. Creeping softly along, he peered in, and there, on the floor by the side of the bed, lay the motionless body of his employer, while a man was kneeling on the floor beside an open iron chest, turning over a bundle of papers which he had seemingly just taken therefrom. The man's back was towards Merridew, and the light was feeble, but there was enough to show him that robbery, and perhaps murder, had been committed. He stood hesitating for a moment what he should do, when the sight of a heavy bludgeon lying on the floor just behind the housebreaker decided him. He picked up the weapon, and struck the man over the head with all his force. The fellow half started to his feet, and then sank senseless to the ground.

The iron chest and some other boxes had been dragged out of a large closet, the door of which still stood open. Into this Merridew dragged the unconscious robber, and locked the door. Then he went to ascertain what injuries the old man had suffered. His heart still beat, so the worst had not happened, as he feared it might. Then he left the house by the way he had entered it, in search of further assistance.

The constables came and took the disabled housebreaker off to the lock-up, and the doctor, after a little, pronounced that old Green's injuries, though serious, were by no means fatal. The man was taken

the next morning before the nearest magistrate, and Richard Merridew attended as principal witness.

The prisoner was a tall, powerful man, with a shock head of hair, a full beard, and a face of that peculiar raw flesh red tint which the Australian sun so often gives to the human skin. He listened attentively while Merridew was giving his evidence, and when the magistrate asked him whether he had any questions to put to the witness, he turned, and asked Merridew, in an insulting tone, whether they now met for the first time.

An answer of indignant repudiation rose to Merridew's lips; but, before he spoke, he looked attentively into the robber's face. Not a sound was heard in the court as he stood silent. He turned deathly pale, staggered back from the spot where he stood, and a few half-articulate words fell from his lips. A murmur ran through the room. Sir David Kedgbury, who was hearing the case, had never quite approved of this young man from nobody knew where, and now he pricked up his ears, and asked him sharply:

"Do you know the man, Merridew? He seems to know you, and you don't look as if you cared to meet him again. Why don't you answer?"

The suspicious whispers of the crowd and the magistrate's suggestive words recalled Merridew's self-command. He collected himself, and answered:

"I have seen the prisoner before. He is my brother."

There is no need to describe in detail the excitement amongst the audience which followed this speech; or the subsequent wonder, which on this occasion considerably outlived the traditional nine days; the surmises as to the antecedents of Richard Merridew; and the speculations of the more charitably-minded as to whether he had not really been in league with his brother, in spite of his fair speaking. But the story, after all, had nothing mysterious in it; it was the painfully familiar one of the family black sheep. This brother had been sent out to Botany Bay when Richard Merridew was but a child; and the family, having heard nothing of him for many years, had hoped that he had either settled in respectable courses or had "disappeared" in the bush, as involuntary colonists had a trick of doing. Anyhow, they had ceased to apprehend the return of their disgrace from the other side of the world; but events showed they were a little prema-

ture. The ex-convict raised enough money to pay his passage home; got wind of his younger brother's whereabouts; and, judging from past experience perhaps, decided that he might do worse than explore the recesses of Lawyer Green's strong box, seeing that Lawyer Green bore the character of being a rich miser.

Seldom had Shillingbury known such a week of surprises as that of the burglary, but a greater surprise than any was yet in store. During the illness of Lawyer Green many guesses were hazarded that, when he got about again, he would soon provide himself with a new clerk; but, much to the surprise of everybody, he lost no opportunity of speaking in the highest terms of Richard Merridew, and of his conduct during the late crisis, as soon as he was able to speak at all. The enterprising stranger with the red beard was sent once more to Botany Bay, and very soon after this event it was announced that Lawyer Green had taken Richard Merridew into partnership.

But the firm of Green and Merridew did not last long. On the old man's death, Richard Merridew succeeded to the entire practice, moved into his present house, and became the legal adviser to Shillingbury and all the country round.

In according their confidence to a man who was, after all, the brother of a convict, it is certain that the public paid an involuntary tribute to the discernment of Lawyer Green, who, crooked and unscrupulous as he may have been in his profession, was, undoubtedly, no bad judge of character. We agreed to give Merridew a fair trial, on his late employer's recommendation, as it were, but his success was not achieved, neither was his position assured, all at once. It is, doubtless, quite as well that a confidential solicitor should not number amongst his relations a brother who has been sent to the antipodes at the Government expense, and this fact for a time did tell heavily against our man of law, but shrewdness, good-humour, and unswerving integrity told in the long run. His practice increased year by year, somewhat slowly, indeed, but the turning-point in his fortunes came when he undertook, and eventually won, a lawsuit which Sir David Kedgbury had instituted against the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The practitioner who could get the better of this most potent, and, at the same time, vague and undefined entity, was naturally regarded as a very St. George amongst solicitors. Soon after this great

feat, Mr. Merridew married the daughter of a neighbouring yeoman, a young lady reputed to be an heiress, a saying which proved to be nearer the mark than such sayings often are, for, when a year after the marriage his father-in-law died, Merridew found himself the possessor of a wife with a fortune of forty thousand pounds.

When men are known to be "warm men," when it is evident that they no longer need work in order to live, it is wonderful how eager the world becomes to thrust work upon them, and so it was with Richard Merridew; after he had engaged a managing-clerk and set up a couple of hunters, clients came in from remote distances. He was known to be a clever lawyer; besides this he had "a stake in the county," and a stake of this sort, in the eyes of the average Briton, is little less than a *sine quâ non* for the man who may have to be made the sharer of legal secrets.

Lawyer Merridew's lot in life always seemed to me to be a particularly happy one. He was by far the most influential man in the town, and he would have been more than mortal if he had not felt a thrill of pride and pleasure as he reflected that this matter would be a success, and that a failure, just as he might vouchsafe to give or withhold his approval.

He had won a good fortune by his industry and talent. He was everybody's friend, and, though he was the accredited representative of a profession whose members, rightly or wrongly, have won the reputation of having a tendency to seek paths branching off at right angles, more or less acute, from the rigid one of perfect rectitude, no one could be found to say that Mr. Merridew was anything else than an honest lawyer.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

CHAPTER II.

THE "powerful and fast sailing steamer," *Oriental*, having on board Lieut.-Colonel Hamilton, the newly-appointed Deputy-Governor of the Island of Ceylon, was already far on her way to her destination, when upon a summer evening, not less balmy and delightful than that, on which he had paid his flying visit to West Saxford, Miss Dunscombe sat in her pretty cottage drawing-room, awaiting, as was her wont, the return of her nephew.

Mine host of The White Horse, less worthy of credence in some of his conclusions than his guest had supposed. had

only stated a self-evident fact when he said of the mistress of Fair Oak that she had not "worn well." The fine face was hard and lined, and had the sallowness of impaired health, and though a certain distinction of carriage was inalienable, for nothing could do away with the superb set of the head, there was a listlessness of movement and a dulness of expression which put years on to her apparent age. She dressed, too, carelessly and with a too perceptible economy. What did it matter what she wore or how she did? There was nobody in the world who was anything to her but Steenie, and what could a young man really care for the well-being or well-looking of an old woman?

The house, on the contrary, was, in its small way, perfection. She had made it the hobby of her lonely life, and had exhausted no inconsiderable amount of decorative talent on its ornamentation. The pictures which covered the walls and the frames which contained them, the panels of the doors, even the shutters, attested her artistic skill. To her, the one beauty they possessed lay in the fact of the occupation, which had alone saved her—as she sometimes thought—from an incurable melancholy. It was not the fault of her neighbours that she had been thus driven in on her own resources. It was not society that had shunned her, but she who had shunned society. And, after all, what matter how it had come about—so it was. Not all her self-sacrifice had brought with it to Margaret Dunscombe the guerdon of a mind at peace with itself and with Heaven. She was not the woman to complain to others of the fate that had befallen her, but in her heart she did complain of it, and that right bitterly.

She sat—a tall, spare figure, black-robed; her hair, lovely in itself, but too white for the fallow hue of her skin, smoothed away under an arrangement of black lace—knitting swiftly, if almost mechanically, in the window. Presently the gate swung to so as to attract her attention, and she looked up, as she had looked up how many hundreds of times before! to return the nod and smile which she knew would be awaiting her. They were not doing so this evening—the young man came up the little drive more slowly than was his custom, his head bent, apparently lost in thought. On the doorstep he bethought himself of her, and would have repaired his omission, but he was too late. She was at the inner door herself, the eager,

pitiful apprehensiveness of one who lives in the dread of evil tidings expressed in her face.

"Is there anything the matter?" she asked nervously. "Has anything gone wrong?"

"Nothing, I assure you," the other replied with a short laugh, as he stooped to kiss her. "There is news if you like, but it is anything but doleful news. You should ask Nellie."

"Nellie!" Miss Dunscombe repeated in a surprised voice, from which the anxiety was banished. "Is it possible that, after all—"

"Nellie and I have come to an understanding. My dear aunt," taking her hand in his, and looking into her face with eyes at once frank and tender, "it would have been possible, had it not been that we arrived at one month ago. I could not tell you at the time. The secret was hers, not mine, and I was bound in honour; and now, after all said and done, there was no need of secrecy in the matter at all. We had been disquieting ourselves about a shadow all along—you, and I, and Nellie herself. Will it be very trying to your maternal feelings to hear that Mr. Bevan never was ambitious of claiming me as a son-in-law at all? That, in fact, he was rather aghast at the bare idea of it."

Miss Dunscombe drew herself up with a gesture of irrepressible haughtiness.

"The mistake was of his own making," she retorted; "but I have everything to learn apparently. You had better go and get ready for tea, now. You can tell me all about it presently."

"There is not much to tell," Steenie said, upon his reappearance. "You know how things have stood between Nellie and me since we were children. As to love-making, there has been none, I consider, for the last five years, but we were great friends, of course, and I won't say there has not been a little mild flirtation now and then. I don't know who it was, some gossip or other, a year or two ago, put it into Nellie's head that her father meant to make a match between us, and that you and I were in the plot. You remember how odd she was, and how she took to staying away at one time? Exactly, and the consequence of that was to strengthen us in the belief that there really was a feeling upon her side. Vanity on my part, Aunt Margaret; I cannot say what on yours. However that may be, whilst I was taking it for granted, like the donkey I was, that

she was falling in love with me, she was distressing herself with the fear lest she was misleading me, and the end of it was, she made a clean breast of it."

"Who was it—young Stansfeld?" Miss Dunscombe demanded laconically.

"Young Stansfeld. He has not much money, and Mr. Bevan had expressed an unfavourable opinion of him at some time or other, which did not look promising, and then there was this notion she had in her head about her father's intention with regard to me. So she threw herself in a way upon my mercy, and what was I to do?"

"You did not care for her, Steenie?"

The young man laughed.

"If I ever did 'at all," he said, "I was not long getting over it. It has not affected my appetite, as you could bear witness. I may have been a bit mortified; but to be quite candid with you, I think I was more so, to-day, when I saw I was as little wanted by father as by daughter. For some time past, it has been dawning upon me," he added in a troubled voice, "that Mr. Bevan did not care to have me about him as much as he used to do. For one thing, I have been thrown in his way more; if one comes to think, it is not much a man sees of a junior clerk in his office, and it may just be that now he does see something, he finds he likes me less than he expected. If that's it, I am sorry for it, but I can't help it. He has known me, more or less, all my life, and I can't do more than my best to please him."

Miss Dunscombe looked across at her nephew, the shadow of a smile fitting round the corners of her mouth.

"You are reversing the proverb, Steenie," she said dryly; "you are visiting the sins of the child upon the father, it strikes me. A sore spirit is ever sensitive, and it is human nature, if one is compelled to hide one's feelings about a real grievance, to take refuge in an imaginary one. I don't suppose anyone would be so much surprised as Mr. Bevan himself were he to be told he had changed his opinion of you."

"He may not have changed it at all. You may retain your good opinion of a person—to the extent of thinking them trustworthy, and all that—and take a personal dislike to them just the same. I put it the other way because it seemed, on the whole, less unflattering to oneself, but I believe in my heart the true reading of it is this—he has got to hate the sight of me."

"Steenie!"

"I am quite in earnest," the young man replied. "How it has come about I have as little idea as you have; but there it is. I don't think I am particularly thin-skinned, and whether you believe it or not, I have no feeling left about Nellie. I took her for a time, as she took me, until she met with somebody she really liked, as a matter of course; and I am very glad she has a chance of being happy, without getting worried out of her life beforehand; but I am certain there is a screw loose with Mr. Bevan. What should have put it into my head if there were not? He has always been good to me."

"He has been your best friend," his aunt cut in sternly; "and I cannot bear to hear you talk about him as anything less. You young people are too exacting. The more you get, the more you expect, and you make no allowances. Mr. Bevan has not been well for months, and a sick man, overwhelmed with business, is not likely to be over-gracious."

"I don't see any difference in his manner to anybody else," Steenie persisted. "But what is the good of talking? I don't expect to have life smoothed for me more than for other people, and I shall get used to being snubbed. Only I would rather be snubbed by people I cared nothing about. I was going to tell you about Nellie and her admirer. You must not be 'quite too awfully' shocked, Aunt Margaret. They were caught in the act of—kissing each other!"

"I am not surprised at anything nowadays," Miss Dunscombe replied, without any trace of that emotion; "nor, I should suppose, is her father, as, from what you said just now, I conclude he is satisfied."

"He seems to be—quite. He stormed a little at first, simply, it would appear, on account of the clandestine way in which things have been going on, and then he seems to have kissed Nellie and shaken hands with Stansfeld, and left them to their bliss."

"And when did all this happen? Last night?"

"Last night. Nellie called for her father this afternoon, and he told me to run out and speak to her, she had something to say to me. She was at the door with her ponies, and before she had finished telling me, Mr. Bevan came out, and she said straight out before him that she had been afraid he had different views for her and me. He could not imagine, he

said, how any such idea got into her head. I was the last person in the world he should have thought of in connection with her. If you don't call that giving a fellow a pretty distinct snub, I don't know what you would."

"I don't understand it," Miss Dunscombe said, a slight flush perceptible under the dull hue of her skin. "If I thought for one moment that Mr. Bevan had really had enough of you, you should not remain to trouble him a day longer. But after all he has done for you, it would seem an ingratitude even to suggest such a possibility. Besides, I had forgotten, you are a man now. It is not for me to say what you shall do, or how much or how little you shall feel bound by old ties and old kindnesses."

If there was one moral attitude more objectionable than another to the young man, when adopted by his aunt, it was this. The relegation of her authority by herself always implied a renewed recognition of it by him, and the present occasion was no exception to the rule.

"You know," he said directly, "I should never dream of taking any serious step without consulting you, and you know, too, whichever you thought kicked the balance, the past kindness or the present rudeness, I should listen to you. I am quite ready to put up with things as they are, provided they get no worse; but I thought I was bound to warn you of possible breakers ahead."

It was noticeable that Miss Dunscombe never suggested that the change her nephew complained of could have been due to any shortcoming on his own part. Her belief in him was implicit. The worst she could credit of him was that he was a trifle touchy, and had been more put out about Nellie than he chose to confess. She herself was not altogether pleased with Miss Bevan, for whom she had no greater warmth of feeling than was the inevitable outcome—inevitable, that is to say, in the absence of positive dislike—of what had been, on the part of the girl, a lifelong intimacy. For her own sake, she was not sorry she had been mistaken as to Mr. Bevan's wishes and intentions; but she was too unselfishly devoted to Steenie not to be ready to acquiesce in

anything for his happiness, and she had not yet had time to shake herself free of her first impressions as to the means whereby that happiness was to be ensured.

"Did I not tell you so?" she exclaimed with pardonable triumph when he presented himself a few days later with the intelligence that Mr. Bevan had seriously suggested taking him into partnership. "It looks as if he had taken an aversion to you; does it not, Steenie?"

"I can't say it does," Steenie replied in a curious voice. "And yet——"

"And yet what?" demanded Miss Dunscombe impatiently.

"I don't know," he returned with an odd laugh. "I suppose when I do get anything into this thick head of mine there is no knocking it out!"

It was certain, whatever the lawyer thought of his subordinate, he was no less good to him than formerly.

He came and saw Miss Dunscombe about the partnership, and in his manner to her, at any rate, there was no difference; and no sooner was the deed of partnership drawn up than he bade the young man arrange for his summer holiday.

"There will be no getting away for me for some little time to come," he said. "We shall have the wedding early in the autumn, and until that is over, there will be plenty to be seen to at home. I can spare you better now than I might be able to do later on."

"It is so much earlier than you expected to get off," Miss Dunscombe said to her nephew when they were by themselves. "Will Eric Mackenzie be able to have you, do you think?"

Now Eric Mackenzie was about the greatest friend Mr. Stephen Ellerton had, and where he lived—a good way, as might reasonably be inferred from the name he bore, north of the Tweed—he had the exclusive right to a very nice little bit of salmon-fishing. For the last three years had Steenie's soul thirsted after a temporary share in this precious possession, and now at last there seemed to be a chance of it.

"I don't see why he shouldn't," he said. "I'll drop him a line to-night, and I don't think if there's a bed to be had in Glenartney, he'll say 'No.'"

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXX. THE OLD DUTCH HOUSE.

COLONEL and Mrs. Forester had a pleasant little English-looking house with a verandah, looking out on fresh-leaved oak-trees. All the front was clustered over with early roses, and there were aloes and other strange plants in the garden. To the right, not far away, towered the great dark wall of Table Mountain. Here Theo spent her first few days of Africa. Gerald was with her constantly, and, after the first almost painful excitement of meeting again, they were both perfectly happy.

Poor Combe was happy, too, in being on dry land again, and in adding various things to her mistress's outfit under Mrs. Forester's directions; but she was much plagued with anxiety about the future, for Mrs. Lee had poisoned her mind.

Gerald had, of course, made his own arrangements for his marriage, in case Theo really came to him. He had consulted some friendly people at the Fields, and they had been quite sure she would come. By their advice he meant to take her to St. George's Hotel, to get a special license, and be married at the cathedral in the next day or two; the captain of her ship would probably consent to give her away. So far, these easily-made plans were knocked on the head by the intervention of Mrs. Forester; it had never struck him that Theo would have any friends of her own, and at first he was inclined to think the good Foresters a bore; but these ungrateful thoughts soon vanished.

His friends at the Fields had done him one real kindness: they had offered to

place eight miles from Cape Town. Here he and Theo could have a fortnight of perfect peace before they began the weary journey to their new home.

Mrs. Forester approved highly of this part of his arrangements. She only wished that the marriage could have been put off a little longer, for she had discovered, in her talks with Theo, how very slight her knowledge of Gerald was, and his of her. No wonder, indeed, that her relations disapproved of her doings. But it was too late now; too late even for delay, when neither of these young people agreed with her in seeing any reason for it. Colonel Forester laughed a little at his wife's anxieties; he liked Gerald, and was sure now that everything would go well.

"He is a gentleman. He's not one of your digger fellows; she is not throwing herself away," he said consolingly.

"She would never have done that," said Mrs. Forester. "I should not be afraid if they were not going to that savage place. She is the stronger spirit, Arthur, and that ought not to be."

"You are a little hard on Kimberley; they say it is improving."

Mrs. Forester shook her head; she would not be comforted.

Gerald and Theo were married in the cathedral at eight o'clock one morning, and stayed with their friends to the service afterwards. It was the quietest wedding, no one was there but Colonel Forester, his wife, and the faithful Combe. A young officer came as Gerald's friend, who had met him accidentally in Adderley Street, and remembered him in his army days.

Theo was not in a dream that morning, as she had been at Helen's wedding so long ago, when she woke up to find Gerald looking at her. She was not the brilliant

and flowers, holding her head very high, and looking out scornfully upon the world. Things had changed indeed; she had gone through a good deal since then, and she was beginning to know that life was a subject for patience, not scorn.

Yet, perhaps, she was more beautiful now; a little pale, a little sad, in the plain white dress she had brought with her, and her sweet face expressing, more than any other feeling, a perfect earnestness. There were no half-measures with Theo; she had once given herself to Gerald, and therefore she belonged to him, and she had not hesitated to follow his fortunes. After they were married, he looked at her anxiously, for in all his happiness he was almost frightened at what he had done. She was so beautiful, there was such a proud grace in her gentleness; and what sort of life would she have to lead now? But she looked up at him with a light in her eyes which reminded him of that day in the cloister at Locarno, and he began to know that in her less demonstrative way she was as happy as himself.

Later in the day, they drove off in a cart to Wynberg, Colonel Forester having undertaken to see that Combe and the luggage went safely by railway to the same point. The day was not very hot, though the sun shone brightly; Theo still wore her white gown, and they were sheltered by the head of the high two-wheeled cart. Their Malay driver sat in front, wearing a blue coat and a great straw hat, like a pyramid.

Her few days in Cape Town had accustomed Theo to the sight of Malays and black people. They, in their lazy picturesqueness, with white teeth for ever laughing, and decked out with bright-coloured handkerchiefs, seemed to belong quite rightly to the brilliant sunshine and black shadows, the enervating softness of the air, the gorgeous fruit and flowers which heaped the market and the little stalls by the roadside. Everyone here seemed to be playing at life, playing at work, not living or working. Gerald said it would be an awful thing to live at Cape Town, but Theo was not so sure. In the strange mixture of her character there was something that understood the feeling of the lotus-eaters, and she was a little tired and languid after the summer just ended, which was going to begin again for her.

The black people looked up and laughed at them as they drove along. Other carts drove by, with jingling bells; and the

people in them put their heads out and laughed too. They met waggons drawn by long teams of mules, which plunged and kicked, and were as lazy as the natives; long whips were cracked, and there was a great deal of shouting. Beyond all the dirt, and noise, and colour of the town—they had to drive through the Malay quarter—Table Mountain rose dark and sombre, with clouds about him, and the Lion lay watching, and misty mountains far away looked soft and blue.

Then they drove on through a wind-swept country, with straggling trees all blown one way, a sandy tract between the mountains and the sea. White sails were flashing away on the blue water, and the waves were breaking on white sand. Beyond this, they came to low, white villas in shady gardens, with agapanthus growing, and other strange, solid-looking flowers that Theo had never seen. Then on past vineyards, where handsome Malays kept little fruit-stalls by the roadside, then through a shady road where the sunbeams glinted softly through the thick twigs of budding oak-trees.

At one place they came to a bridge with a stream far down below, where some Kafirs with red handkerchiefs on their heads were beating clothes on stones. Gerald and Theo reminded each other of the washerwomen at Locarno.

"But I was wretched when I saw those women, for I hadn't got you then, and now I have," said Gerald. "So I like this better than Locarno, and the blackies better than those good Swiss. Don't you? Wouldn't you rather be here?"

The question hardly seemed to want an answer.

"I don't know why anyone should ever be afraid of Africa," Theo said presently.

They were both silent, and looked round. Certainly in no country could the sun shine and the air breathe more sweetly; crickets, if not birds, were singing all along the sides of the road, which ran now red and sandy through tall, dark pine-trees. Presently this perfect peace was disturbed by meeting a Malay fish-cart tearing along the road with hideous noises on a horn made of sea-weed. As this instrument passed away into the distance, it was like a fog-horn at sea.

Then came silence again, and presently they turned into a shady lane, and then into a long, quaint avenue of willows; then crossed a bridge over a stream, and stopped in a wild garden at the foot of a

flight of broad old steps. These led up to the "stoep," a kind of raised terrace or balcony, in front of an old Dutch house, with white, rough-cast walls, and a roof of thick, dark thatch.

There were flowers everywhere: all along the stoep stood pots of flowers; down below, by the bank of the stream, was a hedge of blue plumbago; roses and geraniums, just coming into flower, grow in wild clumps and masses all about. And the sun shone over it all, and everything seemed to lie quietly basking, while the crickets sang loudly, and the water flowed with a gentle swirl; and Combe, the only creature who was not quite happy there, came forward from the open door to receive her mistress.

The bride had kissed her that morning when she had done dressing her—a difficult task with eyes blinded by tears.

Theo knew very well what was poor old Combe's chief trouble, how she felt that this African business was her fault, just as much as Lady Redcliff's. If she had had a little more courage, a little more faithfulness! But all the reproach came from herself, none from her mistress, who was only more gentle and considerate than ever.

"I wish this was home, Theo, after all," Gerald whispered to his wife as he brought her up the steps. "The house at the Fields is very different, you know."

"Don't talk about it now; let me love this," said Theo.

They went into the hall with its brown polished floor and panelling, and then into the rooms that opened from it on each side, all cool, quiet, dark, with Venetian shutters closed. There were flowers on the tables, on the deep window-seats—everywhere. The drawing-room was the least attractive room in the house, for it was furnished in an English upholsterer's fashion of a few years ago, with an elegant suite of blue damask; but the drawing-room did not affect the happiness of these people much.

That day began a little idyl in their lives; they both believed that nobody had ever had such a honeymoon before. The wildness, the remoteness, the newness, the touch of adventure in the whole thing, the doubts and difficulties through which they had made their way to each other; all this, real as it was, gave life a wonderful feeling of romance. Of course they had done a very foolish thing; Gerald knew that when he allowed himself to think for

a moment—for he was more prudent and less high-spirited than Theo—but she was so calm and fearless about the future that he almost ceased to fear it for her, and the untroubled peace in her eyes made him too happy to be anxious. After all, they could not have lived away from each other. What did a few little outward hardships matter, compared with such a heartbreak as that?

They talked a great deal about the past and the future as those short sweet days flew by. It was rather delightful to find that, after all, they knew so little of each other, and had such endless discoveries to make. Every day was more beautiful, more dreamlike, than the one before it, and every day there were more flowers, and the sun was warmer, and they found some new charming corner about their old house and garden to waste the hours in. It was only for a fortnight. Theo forgot that it must ever end, giving herself up to the languid charm of those long afternoons. Gerald was more restless; all among those rose thickets he was haunted by the thought of a barren, treeless land, with dust-clouds blowing, and he grudged every minute of that golden time at Wynberg, which must so soon be left behind.

They used to sit for hours on the grass near the stream where the roses grew, and the blue plumbago hedge looked like a fairy wall to keep the world out. Then they would stray on a little farther to a delightful sunny slope where strawberries grew, and they were quite young enough to care for strawberries. On more energetic days they would wander on through a shade of pine-trees, out upon the flats, where they could see misty mountain-ranges far away, and the low ground was covered with wild flowers. Theo found a lovely arum growing in a puddle, and dreamed over it for some minutes before she called Gerald, who was gathering heaths for her a few yards away.

At night the Southern Cross and all the stars shone down upon them as they sat out on the stoep, and the crickets sang, and the flowers were sweeter than in the daylight; and so time went on till the last evening came, and they sat there talking about Ada. Gerald was explaining how he had left her money enough for a year; he was a little surprised to find that Theo knew as much about Ada's arrangements as he did himself.

"Since last spring," said Theo, "she has

belonged to me as much as to you, remember."

"I believe that was why—I believe you like her better than me," said Gerald, laughing.

"She deserves it more—don't you think so? Seriously, though, I think it was a pity she did not come out with me. The child can't be very happy left alone at Mrs. Keene's."

"Well, I don't know," said Gerald, feeling that he did not particularly want Ada just now.

Theo looked up with a smile in her eyes.

"You don't know!" she said. "Selfish, jealous, grasping! I know that I should like to have my dear little Ada, and if Kimberley is not much worse than this, and if you seem likely to make your fortune there, we will send for her in the spring."

"Not much worse than this! Dear, you don't know what you are talking about," said Gerald dismally. "You idealise things in a wonderful way, but that will be beyond your powers."

"Then why are you tired of being here, and anxious to get there?" asked Theo quietly.

"How can you say so!" exclaimed Gerald, astonished.

"Don't I know? You are beginning to find it all monotonous—flowers, and strawberries, and everything. Now, I could stay here in a dream of perfect peace—till it rains."

"It is not monotonous. I hate the thought of leaving it," said Gerald earnestly. "I know I shall never be so happy again. But it must end, you see; it's ended now almost; and at the other place there's lots of work and life going on. I'm afraid I'm not lazy by nature, Theo. I suppose you are."

"Never so happy again!" repeated Theo in her low, dreamy voice. "Is that what you feel? As for me, I mean to go on being happier and happier. What does it matter where one is, after all?"

Gerald somehow had not any words for an answer to this.

"And do you really think I'm going to make my fortune?" he said after a time.

"Why not?" said Theo.

"Listen, darling: I'll tell you something. I don't know whether you will forgive me. The man who lent us this house—he is a banker there, you know, and he knows more about that part of the country than

most people—he told me, just before I started off to meet you, after I had bought the house and settled everything, that he believed this company of ours would turn out a complete failure. He says it is much too soon to think of building decent houses at the Fields. In another twenty years or so, when the railway has got there, so that the cost of transport is not quite so enormous, it will be a different thing, but at present it is a speculation that won't pay. In fact, he made me very sorry that I had ever had anything to do with it, for it is like most of Clarence's affairs, you see—it doesn't stand on its own feet. A good many people will be taken in, and then the smash will come. The directors may get something out of it, or they may not. Now, you see, Theo, I have brought you out to this. I can hold on to this concern, or I can throw it over, as you please. I don't want to go back to England; I don't feel as if I could now. But, do you see, there was not time to stop you. If there had been, I don't know—Are you sorry?"

Gerald told this story in rather a disjointed manner, with many stops, in a low voice, in the starlight.

Theo was not sorry. She made him understand that.

"No wonder you are restless. Why didn't you tell me before?" she said. "I think you must throw it over. But what can you do?"

"He offered me a temporary clerkship in the bank," said Gerald, half ashamed. "But of course I must write home first; I can't settle anything yet. There is another resource which might make life worth living at Kimberley. You will see when you get there."

"Diamonds—like Mr. Lee," said Theo. "I don't think I like that, Gerald."

"Well, don't let us talk about it any more now. If you forgive me for bringing you to such a country and such a life as this, I don't care about anything else. Do you—do you really?"

"You didn't bring me; I came," whispered Theo. "And it is my country and my life, Gerald."

OUR SHINING RIVER.

VL

WE are to meet at Ifley Lock, so says a telegram just received from Mrs. Pycroft. But Charlwood won't be there, as she hopes. I have just seen the whole party

off, Cleopatra radiant and charming, her parents in the best of tempers, and the Boothbys too. They have struck up a sudden friendship with the Thomas family, and have joined their party, and all have gone off in a steam-launch from Salter's Yard. It is a soft, steaming, misty morning, and I hear the fussy little launch trumpeting loudly in the distance. All is soft and indistinct; the canal-like street, the houses jutting on the water, the misty masses of foliage, the meadows all in vapour, the barges looming out like floating bergs. The scene is more imposing thus than when the morning mist has cleared away, and everything is fully revealed in the garish sunlight. For Oxford is not at all a riverside city. All the grand effects that are possible with fine masses of buildings and a shining river through the midst have no existence here. In his way under the city walls, Thames becomes slummy and even gloomy. The fine castle-mound is a scratching-place for cocks and hens, and the one square Norman tower that shows with something like effect from the river is encompassed by the mock battlements of a common gaol. All that is noble and grand in Oxford has been withdrawn from the river, and it is only poetic justice that the pilgrims who pass along the stream should neglect the city which has turned its back upon the mother stream that gave it birth.

But the one part of Oxford that really seems to have affinity with the river is Christchurch, with its pleasant meadows and its old priory church of St. Frideswide—too small to be of much account as a cathedral, but with exquisite detail of Norman work, a bit of Caen or Bayeux transplanted bodily upon these meadows of middle England. This little bit of Oxford, with the hall, the staircase, the kitchens of Christchurch in pleasant, if incongruous juxtaposition; gloomy courts and resounding staircases; and the curious mixture of mediæval and modern life with the gleam of the meadows beyond, and the consciousness of old Father Thames in the distance, make up a picture to be long retained in memory, altogether pleasant and in keeping with the history of our pilgrimage.

A pretty constant stream of visitors filters through these old precincts, guide-book in hand; fresh young couples from the shires around, honeymooning, or otherwise mooning the happy hours away; bearded Germans. Baedeker in hand. and

Frenchmen intent on Joanne; Americans, too, with some succinct handbook that sums up the world in a pocket form, with a paragraph for the Pyramids and half a line for Peckwater Quad; then there is a fanatic in woodwork, who has come half a thousand miles to see the new bishop's settle, otherwise the episcopal throne, and who stands there entranced—or perhaps he is only meditating some scathing criticism for a trade journal. Then there is an artist, who has pitched his easel in a quiet nook, and is working out some effect of light and shade. Add to the tremolo of the footsteps and whispers of pilgrims and the rustling of leaves from outside, the subdued clatter of workmen's hammers, and the rattle of the great metal pipes which are being lifted in and out of the organ-case, and you have a mixture of bustle and tranquillity, of noise and stillness, that encourages one to linger amongst the shades of St. Frideswide. Bishop and chapter, canons, chorists, bursars, and bedells are all in vacancy, they have vanished into air, or are over the hills and far away; and in all this present scene, in the succession of pilgrims, in the noise and bustle of workmen, and the mingled sunshine and shadow, we seem to be on closer terms than usual with a vanished past, with the days when the scholars were not, and when the pious country people came to bring their oblations to the shrine of their favourite Princess and Saint.

Almost unique as a survival of the storms of the Reformation is the actual shrine of the saint, with a curious carved chamber over it, and there is a grim repose in the whole aspect of the church, with its monuments of founders and benefactors—here a stately Countess of the Plantagenet Court, there a grim prior with his crozier, or else some battered knight who followed the Black Prince to the wars, and whose strong aquiline features and vacuous expression record his descent from those Norman Vikings who combined so much sound sense with such shallow brains. Here they sleep soundly enough, these people of the old times, and reck nothing of the changes that have taken place. Silent monks or noisy undergraduates are all the same to them, and they rest just as well as when masses were daily sung for their repose.

Not so much in keeping, perhaps, but still pleasant, is the outside of a tramway-car, with its graduated fares that sound strangely enough to those familiar with the

dignified Oxford of a few years ago. A penny to Carfax, another penny to Magdalen, and a third to Cowley Marsh; but the first two stages hardly to be matched for interest, with a succession of street scenes, dignified ancient colleges, with the modern shops and houses intermingling with the charmingly roccoco porch of St. Mary's, with the twisted columns, suggesting the long and empty wind of centuries of University sermons preached within—most memorable of all, perhaps, the sermon Cranmer was compelled to listen to, apropos of his own execution that was presently to follow.

But at the present moment the people most in the ascendant are the college servants. The hour of their deliverance has sounded, and the helots are in possession of the citadel. For them the four-horse break with the winding-horn that dashes down the High and over Folly Bridge; for them the garden-party in the college gardens; for them the excursion-steamers chartered for Nuneham or Mapledurham. The college-porter drops his float into the quiet Cherwell, and dreams away the hours, undisturbed by thoughts of gates or chapels; the scout is reconnoitring the river-banks, and smoking his pipe, perhaps, on the sacred university barge.

There they lie, all still, silent, and deserted, those college barges, which all the summer long have been alive with shouts and laughter, with the passing to and fro of boats, and the landing and embarking of men in white flannels. The river-bank is as still as a church, except for some urchins fishing for sticklebacks, and the boat-builders' men who are overhauling the long frail-looking boats, before dismissing them for their long vacation. There is only one boat to be seen on the river, passing along towards Ilfey, and that particular boat is redolent, too, of the dolce far niente of the long vacation. First comes the tracker, as riverside people are disposed to call the man who tows, a stout, good-tempered looking gardener, who takes more kindly to his occupation than our Peter does; and in the boat that floats placidly along sits a pleased and placid dignitary of the church, in his broad, clerical hat, the yoke-lines over his shoulders, while in her best Paisley shawl, on the very edge of the forward thwart, sits the housekeeper, with an air of pleased bashfulness and withdrawal from any cause of offence; the housekeeper's daughter, too, a pretty black-eyed girl, nestles under her mother's wing,

and altogether here is what you might fancy a clerical household of the good old times, ere the Reformation had introduced wives and dissensions into country parsonages.

The sun shines pleasantly on the meadows, and on the men who are cutting weeds in the river—a grand harvest of weeds, barge-loads upon barge-loads of them, an especial development of energy this weed-cutting, very local in its manifestation. For now that we are fairly, if not yet embarked, anyhow on the banks of the navigable water-way, it is rather melancholy to see how the navigability of it is gradually passing away. Indeed, if it were not for the pleasure-boats, the river would already be a watery ruin, its locks dismantled and deserted, its weirs only cared for by the miller; with occasional holes and deeps where the fishermen might congregate; but otherwise abandoned and desolate, of no further use, except as a feeder of water-works and canals. As it is, you are met at every point with notices that people using the tow-path must take it as they find it, and if they can't find it at all, if it has tumbled bodily into the river, or been annexed by some fierce riparian proprietor demanding black-mail, such a little contretemps is to be taken quietly and thankfully, as part of our necessary probation.

And yet, if we could take a bird's-eye view of the course of the river from Ilfey Lock to Teddington, instead of decadence and decay, the scene would be one of almost unalloyed pleasantness and prosperity; in every reach a succession of gay pleasure-boats: house-boats, with their bright trappings, lining every pleasant wooded bank; launches darting up and down; sailing-boats catching each puff of wind in their white sails; while in every pool and backwater rows of punts are occupied by silent fishermen, and every isle and eyot is whitened with the tents of those who camp by the way. All this in the sunshine of a summer's day; for let a cold wind ruffle the water and whiten the willows, and send an angry shiver through the trees, while driving showers make all dark and dreary, and then all the tropical glow and brightness of river-life disappears with magic suddenness, to reappear with the swarm of insect-life when the sun shines once more, and the dreary hour is past.

It is difficult to regret the disappearance of the sterner element of the scene in

the loaded barge, the overworked horse straining on the tow-path, the heavy tow-rope—a terror to the light canoe—and the sullen bargee, reckless in the strength of his unwieldy craft—never more to be chaffed in connection with Marlow Bridge, or to vex the souls of oarsmen in Henley Reach. Such as survive are mild-mannered men, who own a boat or two, and job up and down, generally disposed to give a friendly tow to toilers against stream—civilities often more profitable, perhaps, than their regular traffic.

Well, at Ilfley, the pleasure-traffic of the river fairly opens. Above Oxford, the sight of a boat is something of an event, but here we begin to get into the stream of them; and here, too, the river assumes a character of its own. Here is the lock, cool and inviting in the summer heat, with the old mill, weather-stained and water-worn, with its rushing stream and hollowly resounding wheel, and above, the tuft of trees, with the church-tower peeping out hoary and grey, and the red roofs of house and cottage. Just a place this for the miller of Chaucer's Tales, with the clerks of Oxenford looming in the distance, as witness those towers and spires we saw reflected in the water just above.

A little covered wooden bridge leads from the lock island to the mainland on the other side, and the bridge has a wicket-gate at one end, where hangs a bell-handle. A bell to a miller's mind must be suggestive of want of grist, for does not there ring a bell whenever the hopper runs empty, and in this case the bell is not rung for nothing, for our feudal miller levies a penny toll on all who pass this way. But it is worth the money to enter the village in such a suggestive way—the approach by the dusty highway may be commonplace enough, but in this way we get a Pilgrim's Progress flavour. We have left the village of Morality behind us—in which possibly Oxford may be foreshadowed—and we are at the foot of the Hill Difficulty—while beyond the Delectable Mountains, somewhere about Nuneham Courteney, are shining in the distance.

And really this kind of feeling is hardly dissipated as the church is reached, with its pleasant well-kept graveyard, with its church, a quaint and antique gem, set in the midst of the emerald-green. But hardly had the churchyard-gate clacked behind the pilgrim, when over the churchyard wall peered a man with wrinkled, ancient visage, but a smiling, deferential

bearing, who addressed the stranger with all the freedom of a fellow-pilgrim.

"Ah yes, sir, there's a good deal in this place that nobody knows anything about but me. I'm eighty-five—eighty-five years I've known the place, and none of them can say that; why, you might think that these were Ilford people buried here, but I know better. Why, they're mostly Littleton folk lie here, and I can tell you all about them—eighty-five years——"

But my experience of the Pilgrim's Progress had taught that the pleasant inviting words that reach the wayfarer are to be received with caution, as often not tending to profit. Still, there was the church wall between us, so that Mr. Ancient-Know-all could hardly seize me by the button like the Ancient Mariner, or jump upon my shoulders like the Old Man of the Sea. But while I was thinking how I should test the old gentleman's memory with some event such as Magna Charta, or the Habeas Corpus, only being a little doubtful about the dates myself—old Mr. Know-all suddenly disappeared behind the church wall. The reason of Mr. Know-all's flight was not far to seek. A portly dame—a very portly dame—was approaching from among the graves, a dame who was evidently at least deputy-sexton, if not assistant-churchwarden; Madame Holdfast-by-the-law, I dare say our friend John would have named her.

"Did you happen to read what was writ on that theer boord, mister?" pointing to a notice-board by the gate.

And then as I stood aghast, not quite sure as to what penalty had been incurred. Madame Holdfast continued, pointing to the pipe that was giving forth a grateful fume from the corner of my mouth:

"No smooking allowed, that's what it says on the boord. I don't say it, mind ye—but the boord says so; we must go by what the boord says. No offence, sir, begging your pardon."

"Why should not one smoke in a churchyard? Personally, if lying there and conscious in any way of mortal affairs, I should be grateful to anyone giving me the whiff of tobacco; but, perhaps, there are Littleton folk who object!"

Madame Holdfast sympathises cordially, but holds fast by the "boord." And when the obnoxious pipe is extinguished, the portly dame becomes quite genial, and offers her company in exploring the church and grounds.

I dare say Madame Holdfast has chatted often enough with crack archæologists and antiquarians with any number of letters to their name; and she has acquired a good deal of their lore. For Ifley is quite a show church in its way—a little casket of early Romanesque work, in all its somewhat grotesque efforts after richness and beauty, and its quaint, original details have been copied into most of the text-books of the day. Beakheads and all kinds of queer old mouldings over the rich, round, arched doorways Madame Holdfast points out with quite appreciative knowledge. "And not one of 'em alike, 'least they're all alike, but not one jest the same as another."

All this time Mr. Know-all had kept well out of the way, although his venerable head appeared over the wall every now and then.

"It's quite sickening to hear the old gentleman run on as he do, with his eighty-five years old," quoth Madame Holdfast, and then leads me into the church, a simple chapel, one would call it, without transept or apse, but wonderfully rich in its early decoration, with a double round-headed arch dividing the church into three longitudinal parts. "Must have taken a wonderful lot of pains in those ancient days," suggests Mrs. Holdfast in her "handbook" manner.

Again, there is an organ being tuned and repaired, in sympathy with Christ Church; a marvellous organ this, for the clever way in which it is packed up aloft, there not being room to swing a cat across the church, and from somewhere up among the pipes proceeds a voice from some invisible form, while somebody else sits at the keyboard and sounds a note in obedience to the cherub aloft. "Do!" cries the muffled voice of the cherub. "Do!" repeats the organ-pipe, but it is a "Do" that will not quite do, and after some rapping and scrooping, "Do!" cries the cherub again, and "Do!" sounds on the organ, but doesn't get quite right as long as we are there, which shows, if Madame Holdfast could take the moral to heart, that people take plenty of pains in these modern degenerate days.

Quite sure was I that I had escaped Mr. Ancient-Know-all, for he was quite on the other side as I left the churchyard, and hurried through the village, anxious to reach the lock again, lest I should miss the Pyecroft boat. All the same, at the end of the village, a head popped up from behind

a hedge, and a cracked and faded voice exclaimed:

"Did you happen to see my brother when you were up in the village?"

Evidently there are two of them.

"Was your brother a talkative old gentleman—good deal like you in appearance?"

"Oh dear no, not old at all, not by four years so old as me. I'm eighty-five, and I've known——"

But what the old gentleman had known, or whether he was the same old gentleman whom I had seen in the churchyard, or whether there were two of them, brothers who disputed with each other the palm of age, will always remain a mystery. The hedge was thin, and there was even a gap in it, and dreading the fate of Sindbad the Sailor, I took to my heels.

"At last then you have come!" cried mademoiselle, clasping her hands in thankfulness. "Then we shall not collapse altogether."

"And Charliwood?" asked Mrs. Pyecroft anxiously. "When is he coming to join us?"

"By the way," queried Mr. Pyecroft with an assumption of an indifferent manner, "did you chance to see anything of Boothby in Oxford?"

As for Claudia, she said nothing, but I thought that she looked satisfied and happy now that I had joined the party once more. Perhaps that was because she now felt sure of going on; for mademoiselle now informed me in confidence that the voyage from Bablock Hithe ferry had hardly been a success. Mr. Pyecroft had essayed to row, but rheumatism had caught him in the back, and when he enlisted a substitute—a loiterer on the bank—this substitute proved to be rather gone in drink, and so they had been once or twice perilously near shipwreck.

"We are too old, in fact," said Mrs. Pyecroft with a smile, "too old for these athletic exercises, but Claudia must not be disappointed. We will drive along from place to place, and meet you at the end of the day's journey."

And this arrangement seemed to please everybody. And for my own part I felt my responsibility greatly lightened. We could pass under the very noses of the rival party without being obliged to take any notice of them. But I had not yet answered Mrs. Pyecroft's question as to Charliwood, and presently she called me

aside and cross-examined me as to what had passed between us.

"And he is still under the dominion of that girl?" she cried between firmly-compressed lips. "Well, we must rescue him, that is all. Between you on the river and us on the shore, he will hardly be able to evade us."

"And Boothby?" whispered Mr. Pyecroft, taking me by the arm as we were separating on our respective ways. "Did you see anything of him?"

"Oh yes," I replied; "we dined together." But I said nothing of his being with the Thomases.

If the conjunction augured ill for Mr. Pyecroft—though, indeed, I could not see how—he would hear of it soon enough, and it would be a pity to spoil the pleasure of his journey by anticipating evil that might never come to pass.

We started from Iffley Lock gaily enough. Mrs. Pyecroft, delighted at being fairly established on terra-firma, declared that she thought she could walk the distance to Abingdon.

"My dear," said Mr. Pyecroft gravely, "an Empress has done the same thing for your example. The Empress Maude, you will remember, escaped from Oxford Castle, crossing the frozen river and the snowy country, and evading the sharp eyes of her enemies by dressing herself and her attendants in white garments, and thus by night, and on foot, they reached the hospitable gates of the monks of Abingdon. Now, my dear Claudia," pursued Mr. Pyecroft, addressing the boat from the bank, "had that enterprise failed, had the Empress been taken prisoner, the whole course of English history would have been changed. We should have had no Plantagenet Kings."

But here the splash of oars put an end to the dissertation.

"Now, then, come along," cried the lock-keeper, "if you are going through!"

And we came along accordingly. Claudia was delighted as we next reached Sandford Lock, and sank down into a real deep lock. It was the nearest approach, she declared, to the adventure of the princesses who sank down every night into some subterraneous fairland, where they danced the soles of their shoes away before morning.

And really it seemed as if we had descended into another kind of world, and a brighter one, as we rowed forth from Sandford Lock: the river still more shining.

with boats dancing upon its surface; the skies brighter, and the woods more lovely, though, alas! already and prematurely beginning to show the fading hues of autumn. Soon we have passed the far-famed Sandford Lasher, and with that we glide beyond the usual range of the clerks of Oxenford. And then we pass under the lovely woods of Nuneham Courteney, and presently, just beyond the railway-bridge, over which the Oxford express is just now thundering, on its way to Paddington, there we see the spire of Abingdon in the distance, a distance not very great indeed; the same spire that we made out faintly from Faringdon Folly—"Weeks ago now, it seems," declares Claudia.

Now, Abingdon is one of those river-side places that show to best advantage from the river, with its bridge and church, and the little settlement that has grown up beneath the church—the rural church of St. Helen's, that is—which stands pleasantly not far from the river-bank, surrounded by its quaint old church-houses—almshouses, in fact. A grand, roomy old church, with a vast store of monuments and tablets, bearing witness to the former existence of a wealthy, liberal middle-class, of merchants and traders; later in date than the abbot and his monks, but dying out for the most part before the middle of the last century. So that we may believe there was little exaggeration in the description of the old writer who describes Abingdon as a famous city, goodly to behold, full of riches, encompassed with very fruitful fields, green meadows, spacious pastures, and flocks of cattle abounding in milk.

Pleasant is the scene from the river, with the quaint riverside inns, the canal opening out just above with a group of bright-coloured canal-boats, and those old almshouses, with their long gardens, where scarlet-runners and cabbages seem to strive with each other in luxuriance of growth, looking quite tempting and inviting. A piazza of carved oak in front affords a lounging-place for the old people, with charming oak settles to rest their weary bones. Indeed, the wealth of Abingdon in oak settles is something remarkable. We find them in the church vying with the fine carved roofs in exciting the covetousness of beholders. Wherever a place can be found for it is placed an oak settle, dating evidently from the days when the good people commemorated in the storied urns and monumental busts were alive,

and keeping house in good old-fashioned style. To return to the almshouses; we were delighted to find in the spandrels of the oaken archways quaint little paintings of pre-Elizabethan days, touched up, no doubt, and restored from time to time, but still substantially the same. Here is Edward the Sixth, in his well-known bonnet with the feather, and other dignitaries of the period; and within is a quaint little hall with fine oak panelling, where the business of this ancient foundation of Christ's Hospital is transacted.

It is said that the prosperity of Abingdon began at the time of the erection of Burford and Culham Bridges, said to have been decreed by Henry the Fifth shortly before his death, the building of these fabrics having caused the high-road from Gloucester to London to be turned through Abingdon; but Mr. Pyecroft agrees that mere wayside traffic is not sufficient to account for the wealth and prosperity of Abingdon, nor for its decline, which had taken place long before the time of railways.

But thus, Abingdon, as well as a riverside, has a wayside town, with ancient inns and old houses scattered along the chief thoroughfares; a town that has hardly changed a bit since the last guard blew his last blast on the last mail-coach for the western road. No, nor for long ages before, judging from the ancient inns aforesaid, some of which bear the arms of the still more ancient abbey. There are few towns, indeed, so rich as this in old timbered houses, and, indeed, in old constructions of all kinds, although, from its having spread itself along the highways, and never having been belted in and forced upwards by walls of defence, it wants something of the element of picturesqueness.

And then, again, there is the Abbey town—the beginning and meaning of Abingdon—and this begins in the market-place itself, with its tall, fine market-house that domineers over the neighbouring houses—an open, cheerful-looking market-place, and in one corner a severe-looking old church, and at the side of that the fine gateway of the old abbey. But all looks so dark within the abbey precincts, that we determine to put off our visit there to the next day. And, indeed, the Pyecrofts have established themselves comfortably in one of the hotels in the market-place, and dinner is waiting for those who have fared along the shining river.

A CRUISE IN THE MOZAMBIQUE.

IN THREE PARTS. PART II.

ON our voyage from Praslin, Seychelles, to the Comoro Islands in the Mozambique, we again passed through the Seychelle group; Aride Island—no misnomer—and Silhouette, a charming fertile mass of orange-groves, being new to us. At sea the sounding apparatus was constantly at work whenever we were in the vicinity of any supposed danger; in these unsurveyed parts of the ocean, a coral reef or island, previously unknown, may crop up anywhere. It was rather terrible to be awoke in the middle of the night by "Old" Giffard hurriedly reporting, "Twenty fathoms, sir. Rock!" One hardly comprehended how deep it really was, and the general idea that presented itself to my half-awakened senses, was, that we should strike immediately. When in the latitude of Quiloa, off the African coast, a violent squall of wind and rain came on, with curious regularity, each night in the middle watch, on one occasion catching us at night-quarters, guns adrift and skylights off, and a nice wetting I got in the cabin. The African shore here is a low line of coast, with a range of mountains far inland, a fringe of cocoanut-trees, washed by the sea, being the sole verdure in sight. Here and there a small dhow harbour exists, little suspected, except by the experienced dhow-catcher. A day's sail from Cape Delgado, we sighted the high peak of Comoro, distant seventy miles. I was looking out brightly for it somewhere about the horizon where land is usually first made out, when it was suddenly pointed out to me up above all the clouds, high in the sky, and there was the lofty flat-topped peak, eight thousand feet above the sea, like Jan Mayen in Lord Dufferin's book, *High Latitudes*. By night and day the very sharpest look-out was kept for slavers, or dhows, the vicinity of Delgado being a very likely place.

The Comoro Islands are four in number—the old charts put a fifth, which, however, does not exist—nearly midway between the northern point of Madagascar and the African coast. Comoro, the largest, is under various native chiefs; Johanna, the next in extent, under a sultan, but much subject to England and the consul, who owns a large sugar-estate at Pomony; Mohilla, with a native queen, is dominated by the French; and Mayotta is wholly French, with a

governor and garrison. Daylight revealed the island of Johanna on our port bow. Its peak is rarely seen, except in early morning; being more than a thousand feet higher than the other mountains, it attracts the clouds, and is generally wrapped in a thick vapour.

Innumerable cone-shaped hills shot up, one behind the other, mounting into the sky; some, sharp as needles, rose sheer out of the sea. Thus early, they were capped and softened by lakes of fleecy clouds, half shrouding the lovely rose-tipped peaks, purple, and violet, and grey, like the yashmack of a Turkish beauty. Soon a faint greenish-grey tint took the place of the purples and mauves, and as day fully dawned, deep fissures and clefts, tumbling streams and shaded valleys, all clothed and fringed with lovely tropical verdure, were revealed to sight. Johanna exactly resembles a comparative view of the mountains of the world in the atlas of our childhood. It is the healthiest of the group, though when a visitation of cholera occurs, many are the gaps it leaves behind. Nearing the land, Saddle Island, and a peculiar low notch to the right of the highest peak, and dog's-ears, denoted the harbour of Pomony, whither we were bound.

There is no bay, but to all appearance an open roadstead; on each side of the entrance a reef juts out, with a narrow winding passage between. In the very middle of this passage is a coral patch with one, two, and three fathoms upon it. Passing the right-hand reef I could have thrown a biscuit upon it from the bridge. A series of—to me—wonderful manœuvres with the engines, spanker, and boom, had the effect of turning a sharp corner, with our bow into the tiny harbour, where we moored. The first person to board us was the King of Johanna's father-in-law, Seyd Drayman, commonly called "Seydi," an Arab of fine presence, who solicited our washing. Landing on the beach, which was no beach at all, but a confused heap of enormous round blackish stones, upon which a surf generally broke, I hopped on shore from stone to stone, pursued and overtaken by a small crested wave, that just caught me. Crowds of mild-eyed, lightish-brown women were collected to see me land, chattering and smiling, and presenting their fat little coffee-coloured babies to be admired; the men appertaining to them were all at work at Mr. Sunley's sugar-factory, where, though little

ground is suitable for its cultivation, what is grown is of excellent quality. Coffee also flourishes here, and will probably form the wealth of the future, clinging as it does to the steepest mountain-sides. We walked and climbed—glad, indeed, to be ashore once more—up the course of the river, which babbled at the bottom of a deep ravine, among enormous boulders of grey stone, smooth with the water of ages. The dark stream is overhung with tree-ferns, magnificent stephanotis, monkey ropes, and calmias; the sides are perfectly steep, the vegetation falling down like a curtain on a wall about a hundred feet deep. It gives an air of mysterious gloom to these ravines, not a little melancholy, but you can always find a cool place in which to rest, even in the hottest noon-day.

With the wind on shore, crossing the bar of the river is a risky proceeding, little to my taste. You go in on the breast of a great surf, which may, or may not, last you in, and are flung up on the beach smothered with foam. I always expected to meet the fate of the captain of the *Lyra* and good Bishop Mackenzie, who, when crossing this bar, were cast into the boiling surf, and their boat shivered to pieces. The bishop had his best clothes on, too, which was very hard. The bow of their white whaler, stuck upright in the sand, confronted me each time I landed. Pomony harbour, during the greater portion of our stay, was hardly a correct term for the little reef-locked basin in which we lay. High-water springs cause the sea to roll in over the outside reefs without breaking; with anything like a strong wind, the sea was tremendous for a harbour. We laboured and rolled heavily, shipping several seas into our ports. Seydi Drayman paid us a visit each day, and was not consoling. "This-e no worser at all; worser than this-sometime," he observes with a frightful grin, wherein the whites of his eyes all round are visible, and the betelnut juice runs out of the corners of his mouth. Seydi seems to be the universal newsmonger, interpreter, and provider; besides farming out our washing, he is the beef contractor. "Must give good beef," he mentioned casually, "cause you got your missus aboard."

One afternoon was spent in picking out places for the two new beacons, which when in one, take a ship safely through the entrance, clear of the middle patch. I had to be carried over a swollen river by two highly odoriferous black fellows; one was a most alarming-looking creature, with the

tips of his fingers, feet, and lips dyed of a blood-red colour with henna. Instead of a quid, they put a little lime and a bit of betel-nut tightly up in a leaf, and are continually chewing it.

Landing one night abreast of the ship for my husband to take Alpha Centauri (which was contrary, and disappeared the instant it was wanted), we must have had a most diabolical appearance. Thenightpitch-dark. He, sextant in hand, sitting on a stone with the artificial horizon, a pool of quicksilver before him, into which he was intently gazing; the boat's crew grim and silent, standing by, with one lantern, and myself mute beside him. A miserable Johanna man stood looking at us, horror-stricken, thinking that some terrible incantations were in progress! There is a bottomless lake on the top of the mountains, to which some of the officers went—a most terrifying place to the natives; close by is a lake of pitch, birds without wings, alligators, porcupines, and many affrighting things. Unfortunately I never reached it.

The sugar-plantation at Pomony is a most flourishing industry; it is worked by free labour, but the old slave régime is not quite forgotten; they are certainly, however, happy, cheerful, and well-cared-for, and the women are comfortably and even becomingly clothed. Johanna women have a particularly mild, soft expression, and speak more gently than do aborigines in general. Their huts are of the most sketchy description—house-property here cannot be a very stable investment. The consul's bungalow is cool and airy, spread with abundance of sweet-scented grass-mats, the great native industry of Johanna, in the plaiting of which they show great taste and patience. The material of which these mats are made is a species of guinea-grass, growing often to the height of ten or eleven feet, and very fatiguing to wade among. Mr. Sunley's dwelling was also remarkably free from smells, which so offend one's nose on entering a native house. Outside, in the verandah, sat a coloured woman, lazily shaking a white glass bottle full of milky cream, up and down. It was our breakfast butter being churned in this primitive manner.

Looking out of the port about five a.m. one grey, still morning, my husband thought the coral-patch in the middle of the entrance in good condition for laying down the fine new buoy, which was made by the ship's blacksmith for the purpose. Accordingly he started in his gig, with the pinnace

towing the buoy, and the whaler in company. I established myself with the largest telescope fixed in the port. All at once, on the previously almost calm patch, a great green sea rolled in, carrying the boats on its crest, but not breaking till past them. Another swelling wave, and the whaler was standing on end. I saw the men slip off their seats, and the sea roll right over them, a few dark heads bobbing up and down in the boiling surf being all that was visible. The gig, seeing a great wave rolling towards them, had backed out of it, while the poor whaler went stem on. For a long anxious time—it seemed like an hour—I could see nothing but swelling waves and breaking water between us and the boats. I heard the shouts on deck, "Whaler capsized! 'Way there, second cutter!" and the excited men leaping into the boat at the davits. I thought my husband must be struggling in the sea, and would be hit on the head by the capsized boat. I saw nothing more till "Old" Giffard rushed into the cabin singing out, "The captain is all right, and has picked up the whalers." Again I had courage to look, and saw the said captain in the gig alongside the pinnace, towing the sunken whaler. A smooth interval now showed him coolly sounding on the very spot where she had capsized, and then the pinnace went in; two waves broke over them, but were pigmies compared to the former ones, and when I saw the boats again, the buoy was gone from the stern of the pinnace, and was peaceably surging about on its appointed place. The difficult task was done, and beyond a fright and a wetting, the capsized crew took no bodily harm. There was, however, great lamentation over their caps, every one of them being lost. Now a blue-jacket's cap is the receptacle for his most cherished possessions—money, letters, photographs, are all stowed away in his cap—in one of them a five-pound note had been placed for safety, so that the loss was great.

Poor Giffard! he rose by hard work and the sweetest temper to be first lieutenant of the ill-fated "Captain." My last remembrance of him is seeing his cheery face looking down into our boat from the low deck of his ship at Spithead, wishing us good-bye. A fortnight later the "Captain" was lying at the bottom of the sea a hundred fathoms deep off Cape Finisterre, an imperishable coffin for him and for hundreds of gallant-hearted sailors. In the meagre accounts we have of that heart-

rending disaster, no mention was made of Lieutenant Giffard, but as the ship went down in the middle watch, he was probably asleep in his cabin, coming on deck, as the first lieutenant generally does, in the morning watch. He was beloved and lamented, as were many others in that ship.

Divine service on board a man-of-war is always an impressive sight. Our chaplain succeeded in interesting the men, and they joined in the hymns and responses with hearty goodwill, never looking so bored and sleepy as a country congregation does when the sermon is long. Still, when it came to an end, and the stirring voice of the first lieutenant gave the order to "Pipe down, unrig church!" they flew over the benches with astonishing alacrity to carry out his orders; probably the charms of Sunday "duff," well stuffed with plums, allured them to their messes about that time. At all events, the flag was torn off the pulpit, and consigned to the flag-locker, while the pulpit was folded up, and removed to the carpenter's storeroom before you could look round. Much quiet reading was enjoyed among the men on Sunday afternoons from the excellent ship's library, and the well-thumbed condition of all the religious books showed that when the men did read they liked something serious, spelling over every word in a meritorious and painstaking way edifying to behold. In this quiet voyage, so little incident occurring to interest one, my fortnightly dinner with the ward-room was quite an event. Nearly all of those kindly men have gone to the grave since then, but I never forget their unvarying kindness and cordiality.

Taking advantage of a low tide, when the reef was a little out of water, I put on a bathing-dress, and we landed on the coral, wading in the hollows sometimes above my knees. It was like a fairy forest, alive with bright little blue and red fish, whisking in and out of the tiny caverns. I sat down on a huge piece of coral, growing up with a stalk like a mushroom; gathered small sponges off the brain-stone, and delicate pink branches of dead coral lay about to be picked up. None seemed to be growing. A violent shower soon drove us on board. To say it rains gives but very little idea of the sort of way the clouds empty themselves, without taking the trouble to rain in small quantities.

The other islands of the Comoro group now had to be visited, and an audience awaited us at the palace of the King of

Johanna, whose wives, I was told, were impatient to see me. The consul and Seydi Drayman shipped for the cruise; the former dining with us. Seydi brought his own servant, who prepared the rice, ghee, and fish, which seemed to form the only repast he intended to indulge in during the cruise. He would, I was assured, on no account touch any of our food, and his change of raiment consisted of a clean turban, beyond which I am sure there was nothing.

Leaving Pomony, we coasted round the island, coming up with a native dhow laden with slaves. Lieutenant A—— and Seydi, as interpreter, went on board. The ostensible reason (she being under French colours) for boarding her was to inform the fat Frenchman in command that a dhow from Mohilla had been washed ashore at Johanna, apparently capsized in a squall. Ninety-three miserable, skinny creatures were crammed together on the small deck, nearly naked; some crouching on their haunches; some prostrate, horribly sick, and all going into slavery. But, then, she had a French pass, and nothing could be said or done. Seydi remarked, when he came back, "He no give no news at all, he frighten plenty," speaking with a gesture of disgust, and squirting the betel-juice cleverly out of the port. Seydi told me that it was not allowed by the French Government to ship slaves from the coast of Africa to Mayotta, but that dhows brought slaves from the coast of Africa to Comoro; they then sent word to those concerned that slaves were waiting at Comoro to be shipped, and this is how these poor wretches were obtained. The coast round to the town of Johanna is a particularly beautiful one, each mountain clothed to its needle peak with lovely tropical verdure. Light feathery filahoe-trees wave from the highest hill above the town, interspersed with tree-fern, palm, cocoa-nut, and broad-leaved bananas split and torn into streaming flags by the winds of heaven. Sugar-cane, ripe for gathering, looked like a great field of golden grain of gigantic height.

We anchored in the open roadstead in front of Johanna town, opposite the watering-place; a cluster of canoes and dug-outs soon surrounded us, all clamouring for our patronage. The clever way in which the natives managed their outriggers astonished me, as an inch out of the balance capsizes them.

On landing we found Prince Abdullah (the heir-apparent and the King's brother-

in-law), also the prime minister, both in blue uniform, waiting to receive us, and arrange for our visit to the palace.

We had saluted the Johanna flag with twenty-one guns on arrival, which was returned at uncertain times by the dilapidated old fort during the space of three hours. These Johannese dignitaries brought me "plenty salaam" from the Queen, and said that she wished to see me. We went first to the consulate, an isolated building close to the shore, and picked up the consul, now arrayed in a smart uniform. Seydi and the prime minister, who had changed his blue coat for one of brilliant scarlet, now arrived, and announced that his majesty was ready to receive us. Preceded by these grandees, and escorted by troops of half-naked people, we entered at a narrow door, underneath an arched gateway set in the high grey-stone wall. Being a fortified town it is entirely surrounded by a thick wall of enormous strength and solidity. It has evidently been built with a view to sieges, for loop-holes and battlements are placed here and there. Nowhere are the lanes separating the houses more than six feet wide, causing an indescribably stuffy odour to pervade them.

It being known that we were to visit the King that afternoon, every door as we passed was crowded with faces, gaping and chattering at sight of me. We wound through a perfect Rosamond's Bower, till a dead wall stopped further progress, still narrower and more shut in than the rest. Ranged all along with their backs to the wall, eyes cast down, and presenting arms, were the Johanna army; as we passed them a discordant and deafening brass band struck up a tune (name unknown).

At the very top of a steep flight of steps stood King Abdullah of Johanna, a light-complexioned, middle-sized, pleasant-looking young man, with a small black moustache. He shook hands with us in an easy, graceful manner, appearing much gratified at our visit. The King, princes, ministers, and staff made up a brilliant spot of colour. We were then conducted into the state-room, lined with chairs covered with rich, red Turkish brocade. I sat in a very wide one, evidently intended for the most corpulent, and therefore the most admired guest, and talked to the King, who speaks English with a very good accent. His majesty then went to tell the Queen and the two other great wives that I had come. My husband, the consul, Seydi,

and I went behind some thick, handsome curtains into a dark, narrow, airless room, with a high raised bed at one end, covered with costly stuffs, glittering with gold and silver; beside this was placed a long, narrow sofa, on each side of it a tall brass vase—as big as the jars that concealed the Forty Thieves—into which betel-juice was perpetually squirted. There was no other furniture, not a book, bit of work, or a chair. In the middle of the sofa sat the Queen, Manatéli, a handsome young woman, niece to Seydi Drayman. Her majesty and the second wife, Casabo, who was his daughter, prettier and younger still, were there alone when we entered, and received me very nicely. After a few minutes, Seydi having retired, the third wife, Rokeah, who was not related to him, and whom therefore he could not be allowed to see, came in. She was less handsome than the Queen or Casabo, but was as fair as many Europeans. She bared her arm with pride, to compare it with mine, and there was very little difference. Rokeah alone had a child, a little toddling, joyless-looking girl in a sort of fez, which appeared to have worn all the hair off her head, but who seemed to be the spoiled darling of all three wives. The Queen has a slight Roman nose; betel-dyed lips and teeth; beautiful, soft black eyes, the lids heavily darkened. Her dress consisted of a stiff, gold-embroidered body; a crimson satin skirt, sprigged with gold; a high, square cap; some lace over the shoulders; many rings on her fingers; strings of gold and silver ornaments wound tight round her neck; and about a dozen earrings stuck all up the ear, from the lobe to the top, distorting its shape, and making quite an ugly excrescence, pierced with large holes. Bangles, in great number, wound round the ankles, which, thus displayed, showed how slender and well-formed they were. The dresses of Casabo and Rokeah were almost the same, but rather less handsome.

The King and my husband then went away to palaver about the suppression of the slave-trade, leaving me to the three young women, who sent for an old Malay from the Cape, much resembling the Witch of Endor, who could speak Suahili, and also very respectable English, and proceeded with eagerest interest to question me. This seemed the only form of conversation known to them—a habit not confined to these poor native girls, shut up with jealous care from all participation in the world's amusements or interests. Their

first question was whether my husband had any other wife but me?

Living together, as these three girls do, in the greatest harmony, they appeared to think that to be the sole wife meant a life of loneliness and isolation, and therefore very undesirable. Had I any children? And why not? In vain I reiterated that I had only been three months married. Had I got many handsome clothes? (this related to the neat, close-fitting yachting-suit I wore, which they evidently thought very little of.) Might they see how my clothes were made? So kneeling before me they lifted my gown, and then my petticoat in a most respectful way, greatly admiring my black-and-red striped silk stockings. This inspection over, they asked many highly intelligent questions about our own Queen, and her sons and daughters, seeming to know something about her good and blameless life, as well as her cultured mind. I was sorry that I did not possess a print of the Queen to have presented them with, it would have given them such great pleasure. They then asked a great deal about Lady Grey, who, with the Admiral, Sir Frederick, had paid them a visit in the "Boscawen" the year before. I was then taken up to the flat top of the house, where their mornings and evenings are passed, lying or squatting on sofas and grass-mats. It was high above all the other houses, and commanded a fine view of everybody's doings. It was precisely the same sort of lounge for idle people that King David possessed, when "At eventide David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house," with the disastrous consequences known to all the world. They showed me a narrow window from which, with the aid of a really good telescope, they had watched me on board the ship, as we came to an anchor. Long, idle, aimless hours are passed by these poor souls looking through this glass upon the outer world, and this even was a concession to the advance of civilisation, which they treasure as their most valuable possession.

I asked whether they worked. No; the slaves and native tailors made their clothes. The only thing, it appeared, in which they did employ themselves was the manufacture of sweetmeats, of which they are inordinately fond, and in going to and fro, closely shut up in litters, and by night, lest unholy eyes should catch a glimpse of them, between a cool country palace in the hills, which they seemed much to appre-

ciate, and the stuffy, pent-up house within the walls of Johanna. The dyeing of their nails and plucking out of superfluous hairs in their eyebrows occupied much time; but, as far as I could learn, they enjoyed very little of the society of their lord and master. These three girls were so intelligent, that I longed to have given them some lessons in working, reading, knitting; but, as they know no other life, perhaps it was better not to unsettle them. I made many enquiries, both of these young creatures, and also through the consul, as to the medical aid obtainable here. A few old women practise "medicine," which means idolatrous superstitions, and the use of a few herbs and simples; but, if anything serious is the matter, these poor native women resign themselves to death, knowing that there is no available human aid. Great numbers of women die in childbirth, I think greatly owing to the inert lives they lead, and linger unaided in tortures till death ends their sufferings, for want of a doctor. What a field for capable, educated women-doctors exists here at Johanna, in common with all Mahomedan cities of the East, where no man would be allowed to see the poor suffering creature, even to save her life!

MARDON HALL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

I SHOULD fancy that nearly every one has heard of Mardon Hall. At least to judge by the number of people I have taken through the rooms, and the courtyards, and the chapel, and the old garden, it seems to me that it must be a very well known place. Everyone considers it extremely beautiful, and folks do say that, if the Duke of Broadland chose to make a residence of it, it would be the handsomest country seat in the county; but he prefers to leave it just as it was in olden times, before his forefathers were made Dukes for their loyalty to King Charles the Second, so that people may see what a gentleman's house was, outside and inside, three or four hundred years ago.

For my own part, I am "free to confess," to use Aunt Libby's expression, that I have never been able to see anything wonderful or striking about the place. I was born, as you may say, in the shadow of it, at the farmhouse which the late Duke built close to the old house, and day after day I and my brothers ran in and out of the great gateway, and played in the

quiet courtyards, and hid in nooks and corners of the staircases, and screamed and shouted in the banqueting-hall, and ran races through the long ball-room, and dug the borders of the old-fashioned flower-garden, growing used to it all as I grew from a tiny child to a big girl, and from a big girl to a young woman, so that it seemed to me just natural and part of my everyday life, as children who live in town get used to seeing carriages and horses, and are not surprised at shop-windows.

But as time went by, and when my two brothers had gone away—Michael for a soldier and Jim to America—I felt very lonely at Mardon, and so came to have something nearer to dislike than indifference for the Old House, as we always called the Hall. It was the duty of some one from our farm to show Mardon to the visitors who came to see it. Naturally they couldn't go through the place alone; they wanted some one to point out the different old curiosities, and to tell some of the history of the rooms.

My poor mother used to do this when I was a wee thing trotting at her side, but she died when I was only six years old.

Our Aunt Libby, father's eldest sister, came to manage for us then, but by the time I was put into long frocks and a bonnet for Sundays, she was getting too rheumatic to go through those cold, deserted rooms and long, draughty passages, four or five times a day. So I had to learn by heart all there was in the dusty, little brown book, called *An Account of Mardon Manor House in Darkshire*, and take the duty of guide upon me.

At first I rather enjoyed doing it. It gave me a feeling of importance, and it was amusing to see the different sorts of people who came, from lords and ladies down to parties of workmen to look at the masonry, and bands of Sunday-school children out for their annual treat. But by degrees I got very weary of repeating the same story in the same words, and of going through the same performance so often. I left off watching for carriages to drive through the park, and began instead to watch for them not to come, till at last nothing irritated me more than the sound of the bell which hung by the gateway, summoning me to take my keys and go my round.

When Aunt Libby scolded me for loitering about, I always used to say that it wasn't worth while settling down to work in the afternoons, since I was nearly sure

to be called away. But, in reality, I didn't trouble myself much about household matters, because I didn't like such things, and found it more pleasant to leave them to Aunt Libby. I spent a great deal of my time and all my energy in the curious square garden on the south side of the old Hall. My father used sometimes to help me with the heavy part of the work, but I sowed every seed and planted every flower that grew in it, and it was my pride and delight that all the year round I was never without flowers. When I was not actively employed in my garden, I used to sit under the great spreading apple-tree that shaded half the grass-plot, while I read for the tenth, or twentieth, or fiftieth time one of the few books that made up our scanty library at Mardon Farm. I had not had much education. Aunt Libby thought very lightly of all knowledge which had nothing to do with having the linen as white as snow, the furniture polished like glass, and the butter and cheese of the first quality. Everything beyond this she called "fal-lala."

I learnt reading, writing, and sums at the parish schools; and then for about a year I went as a day-pupil to a "ladies' seminary" in Bankwell, where I learnt to call a great many things vulgar and low which I had looked on as perfectly respectable before, and where the word "genteel" was considered the highest term of praise that could be given to any girl. I learnt a great deal there, not from books or of the subjects which we were supposed to study, but from what I saw and heard around me. The result of my new knowledge was that I felt as if life was scarcely worth having, if one did not learn to play the piano, or to say French verbs, when one had to wear unfashionable frocks and hats, and had to answer to the name of Nancy Watson. That unfortunate name Nancy! What a distress it was to me! I always wondered how anyone could have been so ill-advised and perverse as to call a child, whom her mother had named Angela, Nancy. You see my father and brothers considered Angela too fine a name for everyday use, and from Annie they had got it round to Nancy, and Nancy I was always called, though I made many a stand for my right to Angela. This was always the first grievance on my list when a discontented fit came over me, which was pretty often; for, since my training at the Bankwell boarding-school, I took a kind of melancholy pleasure in grumbling

to myself over the terrible distance that lay between me and gentility.

In a general sort of way, this is what my life had been until the spring that Mr. Dallas painted his pictures of Mardon, which have since become so famous. Before he came, the Duke sent a letter to my father, to ask him to have a friend of his—the Duke's, I mean—as a lodger for a few weeks, telling him at the same time that Mr. Geoffrey Dallas had his permission to paint in any part of the building where people who came to sketch were not generally allowed. We knew very little at Mardon Farm of what went on in the world, and so we had never heard of Mr. Dallas, the great painter. Not that our knowing him to be a great painter would have placed him nearly so high in our estimation as the Duke's expression, "a friend of mine," which was naturally the best guarantee a stranger could bring to us, and the greatest claim to our respect.

My father was a very straightforward, plain-spoken sort of man, so all he said was:

"Well, certainly it shall be so, if his Grace wishes it; the gentleman can come, but he must understand he comes among plain folk who aren't in the habit of letting rooms and waiting on gentlepeople."

But Aunt Libby and I thought a great deal more about it than my father did. Aunt Libby was what she called "moithered" at the thought of bringing the best parlour into everyday use for Mr. Dallas, of serving his hot dinner on her polished table, and having crumbs dropped on her carefully-kept carpet; but where else could he have his meals? So Aunt Libby resigned herself after many murmurs, which was more than I did when my father said:

"Nancy, lass, it isn't much you do about the house; when Mr. Dallas comes you'll have to stir a bit, and help your aunt, and save her the extra work."

I made no answer, not being accustomed to contradict my father's wishes, but I made up my mind beforehand that it would be quite unbearable to have to wait on this stranger, and carry his trays as if I were a servant.

The Duke had not said when Mr. Dallas might arrive, so, as we ourselves never did anything without a long expectation beforehand, we began to look forward to his coming in much the same way as we thought of Christmas as soon as Michaelmas was turned. However, in three days after the Duke's letter the visitor was with us, and

we had not got over our first surprise before he had made himself quite at home among us, making friends with us all by his gay, pleasant manner. Aunt Libby was completely charmed with him from the very first moment, for he quite scouted the idea of eating his meals in the best parlour.

In the first place, he said, he could not think of using our parlour for a dining-room, and, in the next place, as he very much disliked eating alone, he should be greatly obliged to us if we would let him have his breakfast and supper with us. His dinner—or lunch, as he called it—he generally took at his work. He was so free and open in his manner that we all quite forgot he was anything so grand as a friend of his grace, and he never reminded us of it by any mention of the great folk he knew.

It was while the awe of his first appearance was upon me that I showed him over the old house, and I went through the names and dates that I had off by rote even more shyly and awkwardly than usual, until we got into the chapel where I was accustomed to say:

"This sacred edifice was erected by one Roger Mardon, and dedicated to the Holy Rood, in 1459, in expiation of the crimes of sacrilege and fratricide. He bequeathed the sum of sixteen shillings yearly that masses might be said for the repose of his soul, and the souls of Lionel and Ralph Mardon, his brothers, and of Dame Lettice Mardon, his wife."

When I had edified him by this history, of which I scarcely understood a single word, he said:

"You must get very weary of repeating the same words so often, don't you?"

I ventured to look at him when he said this, and I met such a kind, frank gaze from his large blue eyes, and such a pleasant smile on his handsome face, that I found courage to say exactly what I felt:

"Yes, sir, I do get very tired of it; you see, I say it sometimes more than a dozen times a day."

"Well," he said, as he looked slowly round the chapel, and then brought his gaze back to me, "don't trouble to do it for me; if you'll just come and unlock the doors for me, and warn me of the pitfalls, I'll let my imagination do the rest."

I didn't quite understand what he meant by pitfalls, but I was very glad to be excused from my usual list of explanations, so I went with him willingly enough, especially as he did not let his imagination describe the places to himself only.

He began with the chapel, and made a kind of story of the people who had been there to worship, and what they looked like, and what they did ; and as we went from one part of the old house to the other, he went on, till it sounded just like reading a book ; and though he was talking about such solemn, dusky old places, he was so droll and lively, that I could not help laughing a great deal, though I felt at first as if I was very forward to take such a liberty.

When at last we had passed through all the rooms and stood outside in the garden, which was my particular pride and care, I said :

"Dear me, sir, however did you get to know so much about Mardon?" for he had told me of a ghost and an elopement, and an old sorcerer, and a wicked step-mother who tried to sell her step-daughter to some gipsies.

"Did you fancy I was going over sober facts?" he asked, looking at me with a very droll expression in his eyes ; "I have been romancing."

"Romancing, sir?" I asked, feeling half ashamed of myself for not understanding him ; "what is romancing?"

"It's a fancy name, Miss Nancy, for the pernicious habit of inventing untruths ; and yet," he added, perhaps because I looked so puzzled, "I may have been nearer the truth in some ways than you'd think."

"Not about the ghost, sir," I said solemnly ; "not about the ghost ; there's no ghost here."

"Isn't there?" he said with an expression of doubt in his voice. "Are you quite sure there isn't? You see, you can't exactly know, for you must be always occupied with your beauty-sleep in the business hours of ghosts."

I wasn't ready enough to answer this before he began to praise the beauty of the garden, and when I told him it was mine he praised it still more, and asked me if I could spare him a rose. I felt so pleased and proud that I could have spared him a dozen, for no gentleman, or lady either, for that matter, had ever been so friendly and pleasant with me, while I was showing the house, as this friend of the Duke's, who I had imagined would be such a very terrible person. It was after this that I began to forget that Mr. Dallas belonged to the great world, or that I had ever been looking forward to his coming with ill-will.

Mr. Dallas lost no time in setting to work at his painting the day following

his arrival. I was very curious to see how he set about anything so wonderful as making pictures fit to hang in rooms, so I offered to carry something for him to the great banqueting-hall, hung with old banners and armour, where he intended to begin. He looked at me for a moment, and then said with his usual smile :

"No, thank you, Miss Nancy ; I'm quite used to carrying all my paraphernalia myself, but if you like to come and watch me set them up, do."

I suppose he saw my curiosity in my face, for, as he arranged his easel, he explained and showed me all his things.

When his canvas was ready, he took a piece of charcoal and sketched a few lines so rapidly, that I could scarcely believe he was beginning anything so serious as a picture. I wanted to ask him if he minded my staying a little longer, but while I was thinking how I should say it, and standing first on one foot and then on the other by way of getting more courage to speak, Mr. Dallas said :

"Don't go away, Miss Nancy, unless you have something which you are obliged to go and do. I like to have someone near me while I am painting."

"Oh, thank you, sir," I exclaimed with quite a burst of delight ; "I want to watch you so much."

He looked up at me from his drawing.

"You look as if you expect to enjoy yourself," he said ; "I hope you won't be disappointed."

"Oh no, sir," I hastened to assure him ; "I shall not be disappointed, I know, because I shall like to watch how you do it."

He gave his head a little shake that might mean anything, as he smiled again. He scarcely ever looked at you without a smile, and such a pleasant one, too. I know I was a foolish girl, for I began to feel there and then as if I could never be thankful enough to him for having come to Mardon to smile at me like that. I had seen nothing of the world, you see, and so I was easily charmed ; besides, he was so handsome, that he might have charmed a wiser body than I was by his face alone. His bright chestnut hair was short and crisp round his square, straight forehead, his eyebrows were beautifully formed, and his eyes were dark-blue. He had a straight, rather short nose, and as he wore none of his beard, but a drooping moustache, you could see his delicately rounded chin, which might almost have been a woman's. When I looked at him

I used often to think how proud his mother and sisters, if he had any, must be of him.

"Have you always been able to paint?" I asked as I watched his rapid progress.

I did not mean to say that exactly, but I could not find words just such as I wanted to express my surprise.

"No, no," he said, shaking his head gravely, as he took his palette on his thumb and began to squeeze some colours on to it; "I had to serve a long apprenticeship before I could paint."

"An apprenticeship, sir!" I cried. "Why, you were never apprenticed, were you? I thought it was only grocers, and tailors, and such people who were apprenticed to begin with."

"Well, a long course of study, if you prefer that way of putting it," he said, laughing at me; "or a schooling. Any way, I had to learn, for no one becomes a painter without taking a good deal of pains to learn many things."

"But doesn't it make you feel very wonderful," I asked, my admiration for the process I was watching finding no limits, "to think that you are able to put down things that take up so much room on a small frame like that, and make them look quite real with a few strokes?"

"H'm!" he said, leaning back in his chair, and smiling, as if my simplicity amused him very much; "if I were the only person in the world who could paint pictures, I might feel 'wonderful.' But, you see, there is no lack of painters—good, bad, and indifferent; so one gets used to the miracle of making a picture."

I couldn't think how anyone could get so accustomed to such a romantic thing as painting as to think lightly of it. For my own part, I thought Mr. Dallas had found just the right word when he said the "miracle" of painting.

"When your first curiosity is satisfied, Miss Nancy," he went on, bending to his easel again, "you'll look on my occupation as very commonplace, and perhaps even you'll begin to consider it as rather dirty work."

But that I never did, though I soon got quite used to seeing Mr. Dallas in one part or another of the old house or its surroundings, with what he called his "paraphernalia" around him. I never passed him without his calling me to come for a little talk.

Sometimes, when I had a party of visitors, he would say: "Shall I come and be showman. Miss Nancy?" And

then he would leave his easel and go all round with them, having a fresh set of stories ready for each occasion.

I began to think of the place at last as having been once inhabited, and even took to imagining to myself what the place must have looked like in those old times that Mr. Dallas described so well. Sometimes when I was busy with my garden he would come to me, to stretch himself a little, as he said, and refresh himself.

My brown studies among my flowers had now changed very much. I was nearly always thinking of something or other Mr. Dallas had said to me, or of something I wanted to say to him, and I watched for his coming almost without noticing that I did. I felt as if I was always expecting something pleasant, the minutes he spent with me being the one thing that was more delightful than the recollection of them. I do not remember that he ever tried to gain my confidence, but I gave it to him completely as I had never given it to anyone before. Sometimes in the evening, when I was sitting under the apple-tree watching the stars come out, he would stroll through the vaulted stone-passage which led past the chapel from the courtyard; and then, while we sat together on the rustic seat or strolled up and down the terrace, I told him all about myself, and all that I longed for and hadn't got, talking of myself as some young people will talk—that is to say, as if their listener had exactly the same feelings about them as they have themselves, and as if there was not a more interesting subject in the world. I even told him my dislike of being called Nancy, instead of Angela.

"Well!" he said, looking at me with his pleasant smile as I touched on this terrible grievance—he had a way of saying "Well!" with a little pause after it—"I don't think I'm quite of your opinion. Angela is a very pretty name, but for my own part I would prefer to have a Nancy running about the house and pouring out my tea."

"Do you like the name Nancy then?" I said almost incredulously; "it seems to me so very common, so very—I don't know exactly what to call it."

"So undignified, perhaps you mean," he said, "but I like it all the same; in fact, I think it is one of my favourite names for a girl."

After that I grew quite fond of being called Nancy, quite proud that the name had fallen to my lot, for his approval or

disapproval was quite enough to change my opinion on that or any subject. I never reasoned to myself about the nature of my feeling for Mr. Dallas, it only seemed to me that as I had never seen anyone like him before, so there could be no one fit to compare to him in all the world. He was never absent from my thoughts. Even when I was not actually thinking of him he seemed to be in my mind, influencing what I said, and did, and thought. I began to have a new standard by which to measure and judge things—namely, what Mr. Dallas would say or think. As to his having any idea of the extent of my idolatry for him or returning my feelings in any way, that never entered my mind. I supposed I was to him merely a rough-haired, overgrown, farmhouse girl to whom he was pleased to show kindness. Nor did I look forward to this state of things coming to an end. It seemed to me as if I could scarcely realise the time before his coming to Mardon, and as to his going away and leaving my life to settle back to its old level, I never gave a thought to that. He was there, and he was invariably kind to me; and the sun shone, and the roses were in bloom, and the birds sang, and it would all go on for ever. It was like the end of a fairy story, where a “happy ever after” fills up every wish and desire. It was like—like nothing else but a girl’s first passion for her life’s first hero, who has come down to her, as it were, from a sphere far above her own.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

CHAPTER III.

THE one person whom, according to Colonel Hamilton, he had left in the world to care for, in the person of his only child, was as bright and sweet a girl as one would meet with in a long day’s march. Without being a beauty, or even, according to most people’s notions, remarkably pretty, she had a face on which it was undeniably pleasant to look, whilst her figure, even judged by a higher standard, left nothing to be desired. She was not, as Margaret Dunscombe had been in her youth, a girl of magnificent proportions and commanding appearance, but she had her share of grace, and even of dignity, and there was in her smile and in her voice a fascination which had never appertained to the other. There was something so genuine about Mary Hamilton—a simplicity so devoid of silliness, and a gentleness so far removed from weakness, that,

young as she was, she was apt to inspire a certain respect, along with the love and admiration which justly fell to her due. She was a good girl in every sense of the word, and she was a bright girl, too—full of innocent fun and animal spirits, and looking out on life with happy, undimmed eyes, such as befitted her few years and sunny experiences.

For hers had been a happy life. The kind people, cousins of her father’s, to whose care she had been entrusted for the last ten years, had done all in their power to make up to her for the absence of her parents; and her mother’s death, though it had shocked and saddened her, had, naturally, not so affected her as it would have done had they been longer together. She had, indeed, in her English home, all the freedom and affection which could have fallen to her share under her father’s roof; and she had grown up, taking it, as it was given, as a matter of course. Of the two boys and four girls who gathered round the well-spread board at The Cedars, South Kensington, the Indian cousin was certainly not the least indulged and beloved. Moreover, very much to her own advantage and to that of others, she had, thanks to her position there, never realised the fact that she was an only child, to be humoured, and applauded, and—literally and deplorably—spoiled.

Her father and she, upon that last visit of his, to which allusion has already been made, had been mutually charmed with each other, and one of the consequences of his outspoken delight in her, was an invitation for her to visit certain old friends of his in Lanarkshire. They were quiet, elderly people, living quite in the country, in what they themselves had candidly described to Mary as a lone part; but they were anxious to see her, and she to see Scotland, and so it happened, as the fates would have it, that Steenie Ellerton, coming suddenly on his long-promised visit to his friend Mackenzie, made the acquaintance of Mary Hamilton. The two places—neither of them very extensive—abutted on each other, and there existed between the families an old friendship, which, on the part of the only permanent youthful element at Birk’s Foot—the laird’s granddaughter, Lucy Macpherson—seemed to Steenie in the right way to ripen into a warmer feeling for his host; and, thanks to this, and to the absence of other society, the four young people—the men at Glenartney and the girls at Birk’s Foot—were

thrown a good deal together. Mrs. Macpherson did, indeed, make a feint of playing propriety, but she had neither the time for nor the habit of playing duenna, and was very glad, moreover, that her guest's month in Scotland should be so easily enlivened. So they fished and they boated; they managed to get a little party together, scouring the country for miles round to do it, for a picnic or two; they rode, one and all of them, upon anything they could lay hands on above the rank of a cart-horse; they got together in the evenings, and lounged about amongst the flowers, and sang Scotch ballads in the drawing-room, and were all as happy as the day was long, and seemed, somehow, to be always all together, and yet always in couples.

It was only natural that it should end as it did. From the first, the young men were friends and confidants in the matter. Mackenzie told Steenie, before the latter had seen anything of either girl, that he had had half a mind, for some time past, to pop the question to his bonnie, blue-eyed little neighbour, and it was not long before the Englishman found himself the object of a constant fire of chaff, on account of Miss Hamilton.

"If I go in for the one, old chap, are you game for the other?" the young laird would enquire seriously as they walked home at night, and—

"What a blessing it would be if you would talk sense, just for once, for a change!" his companion would reply testily; but as time went on, though the question did not vary, the answer would.

"What is the good of talking?" Steenie would say. "If I were as well off as you are, there is no telling what I might do;" whereupon Mackenzie would exhaust his eloquence in the attempt to prove that, according to all the laws of probability, his friend would end by being a richer man than himself. "And she likes you. I can tell it by the very way she laughs at you," he would add conclusively. "She never laughs at me like that."

Yes, she liked him. He felt that; but whether she did more than like him—it was that he was dying to know. And there was only the one way of getting to know it—a way he was not sure he had any right to take. He could keep a wife, it was true, but could he keep her as Colonel Hamilton's daughter might reasonably expect to be kept? He thought little, if anything, of his aunt in connection with it.

She had so indulged him all his life, he never doubted her acquiescence in anything that should be for his happiness; but he did think, and think seriously, of ways and means.

When it came to the push, however, he could not leave her without speaking. For one thing, Mackenzie himself took the fatal plunge, and certain confidences, which had passed between the two girls at an earlier stage of the intimacy, being imparted thereupon to the betrothed of the one, were not long in reaching the admirer of the other.

Mr. Stephen Ellerton, adjured to "go in and win," did at last—after all, it was sufficiently quick work, if you come to think of it!—try his fortune. If he was a little disappointed at the reception his suit met with, it was more Miss Macpherson's fault than his own. She had built too much upon the candid liking expressed by her friend, and had magnified it into something much bigger.

"I do like you," Mary Hamilton said, with a smile and a blush. "But as to loving you—that is another thing. There has not been time—I don't know—I cannot say, whilst you are still here, what I may feel when you have gone away—I cannot be sure of myself, and how can you be sure that, once away from this place and all that has made it so pleasant, you will think any more about me?"

All this she stood to, and more to the same effect, and Steenie, unable to move her further, had to be satisfied with permission to write to her again after three months, should he find himself still in the same mind. In the meantime, it was her wish that he should keep his own counsel as to what had passed between them, and to this he readily agreed, for who could tell whether she would be kind or cruel, when the time came? So they parted with no unusual demonstration on either side, and the last look he had of her face showed it as bright and blithe as though they were to meet again on the morrow.

He got home in time to make one at Nellie Bevan's wedding, which was of the quietest and most unpretentious, neither after the bride's own heart nor after that of the public at large. Nellie had been very anxious to have "the thing," as she expressed it, "well done," and under ordinary circumstances her will would have been law, but that failure in her father's health, to which Miss Duncombe had attributed the change in his manner, had become more

marked even in the short time which had elapsed since, and the girl could not urge him to an exertion, to which he appeared unequal. On the same account, it was arranged that the young couple should, in the first instance, take up their residence at The Holme, as Mr. Bevan's house was called, and thither accordingly, after the honeymoon—that is to say, early in November—they repaired.

There had been some talk of taking young Stansfeld into the office, but though he had been "articled," as it is called, he had shown so little aptitude for that, or indeed for any kind of work, that it ended in talk, and, indeed, there would have been too many difficulties to contend with for any such arrangement to have answered. Steenie, for his part, found a good deal devolving upon him, and worked well. Nothing could have been better for him than the constant occupation, demanding, as it did nowadays, more than mere mechanical industry. He had really no time to think of himself or his own affairs whilst he was at his desk, and when he did find leisure for a little castle-building later in the day, he was cheered by the consciousness that he was actually on the high-road to fortune. The business capacity in him was asserting itself, and was getting scope, for much that, under other conditions, would have remained in Mr. Bevan's own hands, now perforce fell to the share of the junior partner.

Miss Dunscombe went on, as she had done for so many years, it could not be said cheerfully, but quietly and resignedly. Very often Steenie felt tempted to break his promise to Mary Hamilton, and tell her how his happiness (as he took it) hung in the balance; but he did not yield to the temptation, and when one morning in December, on his way to the office, he dropped a letter, the writing of which had kept him up into the small hours, into the pillar-post, nobody but himself knew anything about it or its contents. Most people who read this have known in their time—or, being still young, have yet to know—what the state of his mind was during the succeeding forty-eight hours, and how hard it must have been to restrain his impatience and keep silence as to that which was uppermost in it, as he sat pretending to read, whilst Miss Dunscombe knitted away in her corner. Once he thought he would go out, as he not unfrequently did, and have a game at billiards either at The White Horse or at one or other of the

houses which were hospitably thrown open to him at all times; but he could not bear the idea of having to make conversation, and so remained where he was. The following evening was more trying still, for there is at West Saxford a special late delivery of London letters, and upon this it occurred to him to build hopes. It was not until the next morning, however, the letter came.

It was not long, nor was there in the wording of it any such ardour and impetuosity as had characterised Steenie's own effusion; but it enclosed Colonel Hamilton's address, and it authorised him to make use of it. It said too, "Cannot you run up and see me? I should like you to know them all now;" and after that, what more could the young man want?

There are moments in life—I will not say that they come to everybody, but let us hope one or two such are granted to most!—when it seems as though the world lay at one's feet; as though one's cup of bliss were full to overflowing. Such a moment came to Stephen Ellerton in the reading of Mary's letter.

And as he read, the separate scrap of paper, on which she had written her father's address, fluttered to the ground and rested at his aunt's feet. She stooped from her seat at the breakfast-table to pick it up, and as she did so, involuntarily her eyes fell upon the name—Lieut.-Colonel Arthur Hayes Hamilton.

"Good Heaven!" she exclaimed, and let it fall, as though it had scorched her. Who knows or can describe what passed through her mind in that second of time, what ghosts rose out of the past, and confronted her; what voices sounded in her ears; what quick beatings told that the heart within her was strong in its life yet, in spite of the years? Outwardly she was calm again, though it was by a strong effort, almost before her nephew had noticed her agitation.

"Why—what—I beg your pardon," he murmured confusedly, his whole heart, eyes, and mind so engrossed in his letter as to render him all but deaf and blind; yet catching, as if in a dream, that sharp cry of distress. "Is anything the matter, Aunt Margaret?"

"It is something you have dropped," she said in a low voice, pointing to the paper, which lay on the ground between them. "I did not know you knew any one of the name?"

Steenie stooped and picked the precious scrap—precious in a twofold sense as

Mary's handwriting and as her father's address—carefully up; then, he turned to his aunt a flushed and somewhat abashed face.

"I ought to have told you before," he said—and told her all. If patience and silence be all that are needed in a listener, then he had the best of listeners. Not even by word or look did Miss Dunscombe interrupt him. The dead silence, after the first burst, began to oppress him; he found himself hesitating and stammering, waiting for a word of encouragement, or, at any rate, some audible sign of her attention and comprehension; none such was granted him; his aunt sat as though she had been carved out of stone, and, so sitting, heard him through.

"The more I thought of her the better I loved her," the young man wound up at last, in a glow of enthusiasm. "And I wrote and told her so. And, Aunt Margaret, this is her letter; you are welcome to see what she says; it will make you love her only to read it, and I am to write to her father by the next mail."

Miss Dunscombe put the letter away from her with a quick movement of her hand.

"I don't want to see it," she said. "I am sorry for you—and for her, for it is a thing that can never be. Oh, Steenie!" and her voice broke and changed suddenly, "you should never have kept it from me. You made the greatest mistake of your life in not telling me."

There was so much pain in her tone and expression, and such an absence of anger, as could not but impress her companion, and it was with a pale face, though with a forced laugh, that he repeated the reasons he had already given for his silence.

"Supposing, after all, she would have had nothing to say to me, what object would have been gained by worrying you about it? Still, had I thought for one moment I should have offended you like this——"

"You have not offended me at all," she interrupted him to say; "it is no question of offence. I have a great deal to say to you, and there is no time for it now. You will be late at the office as it is;" and she rose from the table as she spoke, and bending her head, spoke the accustomed grace.

"I know," Steenie said, rising too; "I am going. But one word before I go, Aunt Margaret. What do you mean—what am I to understand by 'a thing that can never be'? You cannot mean me to take such words as those literally." There was

no hesitation about him now, nor was there any heat. The composure of his manner was not lost upon Miss Dunscombe, and she shivered as though struck with a sudden chill; but she did not flinch from the question.

"I do, indeed," she said. "I told you I was sorry—I am very sorry, but I meant what I said, Steenie. It was no figure of speech. If you were to beg it of me on your knees, I could give you no other answer. It can never be."

He was already at the door, but as she finished speaking, an impulse it would be difficult to define moved him, in spite of the words she had just uttered, to come back and kiss her. It was a sort of pre-moroseful feeling he had—a consciousness of the pain she would have to suffer at his hands, before he should make her yield to him. For it was war he meant, and not peace. He was not minded to sit down tamely, and do as he was told.

"I am at a loss to understand you," he said, with an ominous gentleness; "but whatever it is you mean, you have the day before you to think it out; and remember one thing, Aunt Margaret, I have asked her to be my wife!"

She had the day before her, as he said, and a terrible day it was. It was not merely that the old wound had been so sharply and suddenly probed—it had never healed, as it might have been expected to heal, in all these years—it was not this, but the reflection that after all her care and tenderness and solicitude, after the giving up of her life to him, it should have fallen to her lot to deny Steenie his heart's desire.

It has been said before that Margaret Dunscombe was far from being as grateful as we are in the habit of declaring ourselves, Sunday after Sunday, for our "creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life"; but the rebellion in her heart waxed hotter and stronger than ever, as she thought of this new burden which had been laid upon her.

All these years, she had never wavered in the miserable conviction which had taken hold of her mind upon the night of the murder; all these years, she had looked upon herself as the custodian of a secret which was to go down into the grave with her; and on this account, and because she felt that the West Saxford Mystery was to her no mystery at all, she had always carefully repressed in Steenie any tendency to dwell much upon it, least of all with any hope of solving it. At times even she

had bitterly reproached herself for failure in her duty to the wife and child of the murdered man, and it seemed as though his blood did indeed call from the ground and call to her for vengeance; but no torture she could have been called upon to undergo would have unsealed her lips now. Whatever her faults might be, and she had many, treachery was not amongst them.

It was hard to know what to say to Steenie, or how to deal with him. She could not tell him the truth, and yet how, without telling him, was she to bend him to her will?

He had a good heart, and was grateful, and never in his life had he questioned the maternal authority she had exercised over him; but there comes a time when a man ceases to feel himself bound even by his duty to his mother, and this time had come—and come, she could not but confess, later than to most—to her nephew. He would refuse to obey her—she knew it—and what then?

She said to herself that then there would be but one course open: she must write to Colonel Hamilton. She shuddered as she thought of it; not so much at the thought of putting pen to paper to him—though there was a grim irony in the fate which should compel her to that—as at the attempt to realise the gulf which she should thus be fixing with her own hands between herself and Steenie. He was all she had to live for, and she would never forgive her as long as she lived!

She “took in the situation,” as the phrase is, with an utter, hopeless completeness, and had prepared herself for the worst, hours before the young man returned from his work. He, too, had been thinking it out. What his aunt might have in her mind he was at a loss to imagine. But one thing was certain: he had gone too far with Mary Hamilton to draw back, even had his heart not pronounced it impossible.

Thus, with an equal regretfulness and an equal determination upon both sides, the contest began. The very weakness of her case betrayed Miss Dunscombe into a certain bitterness and unreasonableness, and Steenie at last lost both patience and temper.

“It is not reasonable,” he said. “It is not Christianlike to allow a wrong done you in

your youth—before she was born—to spoil the happiness of an innocent girl, whom you have never seen, and who has never injured you. Nor, because her father forgot his obligations as a gentleman and a man of honour—how else am I to understand the mortal offence he would appear to have given you?—is that any reason that I am to follow in his footsteps! If I had known before—if I had not already committed myself so far—I might have drawn back. Aunt Margaret, I would! Though it would have been to repay you with my heart’s blood, I would have done it. I do not forget for one moment that your goodness has far exceeded the claim I had upon it—I do not forget it any the more, because it seems to me that you are asking more of me now than you can honestly expect of me. I am ready to do anything I can to meet your wishes, but there are things no gentleman can do, and this is one of them.”

“Very well,” said Miss Dunscombe.

There was nothing threatening, nothing suggestive even, in the tone in which she uttered the commonplace words; it was simply one of acquiescence.

“I don’t understand you,” Steenie said, for the second time that day. “Am I to take it for granted you withdraw your—”

He did not like to use the word “objection,” and yet could not think of any other to put in its stead. Miss Dunscombe had risen from her seat, as if to put an end to the discussion, and stood facing him, an expression of unutterable sadness in her eyes.

“If I could have withdrawn it at all, I should never have made it,” she replied simply.

The young man sprang to his feet and seized her hands.

“But, Aunt Margaret,” he cried, “consider! You are forcing me—forcing me, in spite of myself, to run counter to your wishes. I tell you I can’t—I cannot and will not write to Mary Hamilton and tell her—tell her,” breaking into a bitter, scornful little laugh, “I don’t want her.”

“You cannot and will not, and I cannot make you,” his aunt replied. “There is no more to be said about it between us. I am content to leave it, as you will have it so, to her father.”

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXXI. THE JOURNEY.

A FEW years ago, when Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Fane went up from Cape Town to the Diamond Fields, only two hundred miles of the distance could be travelled by railway, and the whole journey was an affair of about ten days. Of course the railway journey was at first very much like others, except that the train was crowded with noisy, picturesque Malays. These disappeared by degrees, and after passing the Paarl, with its oaks, and vineyards, and long street of old Dutch houses, the travellers found themselves slowly climbing, going deeper and deeper in among the mountains.

They wound in and out between great grey rocks like castles, with here and there a green, soft valley, which would be dark and gloomy, filled with deep blue shadows, as the sun sank lower, and the rocks and hills above were bright with gorgeous colour. Then night seemed to come suddenly, and the moon shone over the wild, weird, lonely mountains with an almost golden splendour, and the train went wriggling in and out of tunnels, turning sharp corners, with narrow valleys far below full of mysterious darkness.

Two days of this scenery, grander and more wonderful than anything Theo had ever seen, seemed like a fit beginning for this journey, which was altogether the most glorious fun that she had ever experienced. All the wild spirit of adventure, which had had no outlet in England, began to find its use and its satisfaction here. The Karoo, the great rocky plain, when they reached it, was not quite so interesting as the mountains—bare, rugged,

stony, with scrub bush and dry sand. Sometimes they passed a group of Kafir huts, with dogs and children sprawling about together, and women washing in the pools of a dry river-bed.

At last, on a moonlight evening, they came to the place where the train stopped finally, and they were still several days' journey from home, as they called it.

"Now I'm afraid the disagreeables will begin," said Gerald, as he took Theo and Combe out of the little wayside station.

"No; you mean the fun," said Theo, with delight in her voice.

"Combe doesn't think so," said Gerald.

And Combe, grasping her bags and baskets, from which she would not be parted, could only groan in answer.

She was tired to death, poor Combe! She could only see the terror and awfulness of the mountains, the desolation of the plain. She was afraid of the Kafirs, and thought the black must come off when they touched anything; the discomfort of the inns, the strangeness of the food, made her feel ill; she was sure that neither she nor her mistress would ever escape alive from this dreadful country. Every mile farther from Cape Town made her more miserable, for Mrs. Forester's servants had given her a terrible account of the Fields. Even the train, that last relic of civilisation, must now be left behind.

If Combe had disliked travelling in Europe, what was that to this tearing on into savage lands, as they seemed to her, with no protection but this wild young man who was now her master?

It was a strange scene; the rough railway-sheds; the encampment close by, with wild, black figures moving round the yellow blaze of fires, or straggling up to the train. There were lights about the railway, a great puffing and whistling, a rolling of

cars that came to take the passengers on their way. Not far off were one or two white houses with lights glimmering, and ox-waggon outspanned in front of them; but all this was a little oasis of noise and life in the middle of a great stretching plain, over which the moon shone calmly for miles, a world of perfect stillness, scattered over with rough bush and heaps of stones, and bounded by a solemn chain of mountains far away.

The inn was very dirty, very comfortless, not much more than a canteen, so that it was with great difficulty they got a room to themselves; but they were too happy to care; they laughed together and made fun of it all. After a very rough supper—but they knew what it was to be hungry, and did not care for that—they went out for a stroll by moonlight on the great plain. It was not actually so flat as it had looked from the railway, and a few hundred yards took them beyond a rising ground, out of sight of houses, station, railway, Kafir huts, and every sign of life; they were alone together in that silent country, under the African moon and the stars that she made pale.

"I wish it could be all like this. This is worth living for," said Theo, as they wandered slowly on. "Away from all those people—those passengers, what a noise they made! All day I have been wishing for something like this. Oh, Gerald, it is so nice to have nobody else—you and I, and nobody else in the world."

"You don't think it is a dream, do you?" said Gerald.

"I don't care what it is. I only know it is perfect. How could you run away to this glorious, beautiful country, and leave me behind?"

"Sometimes," Gerald said, "when I was coming down to meet you, I used to walk off like this by myself, and wonder if it was possible that I should ever have you with me here. It's very hard to believe it now—now that I've got you. Yes, I think it is rather grand, there is so much more room than in England; but it is a dreadful country too, Theo, in some ways. Man is vile on this continent, my dear child, that's certain."

"Now I should think it was so easy to be good here," said Theo. "Don't you see, in this great, still world, there is so little between us and the angels. In England there is hardly one bit of desert country to look straight up at the stars. There is no room for anything one doesn't

see. One's thoughts are all tied down—houses, and servants, and crops, and fashions, and all the details that people make such a fuss about. Here they are all nothing. Life is simple, and grand, and perfect. Gerald, I think you and I are most gloriously fortunate. Do you know, it is the sort of thing that I have dreamed about. If only I had Aster, and could ride straight away to those hills! Look at the hills, Gerald—the white light over there. I think the angels are coming over them now."

"To meet you," said Gerald.

It had indeed a wonderful, spiritual beauty, that vivid glory of night, which seemed to tremble on the hills as if something unearthly was passing over them. Theo gazed away into the distance with dreamy, entranced eyes. Gerald's arm was round her, and he stood looking down into her face while she dreamed and talked in her low, gentle way. Presently he kissed her, breaking the spell suddenly, and bringing her back from the hills and the angels.

"Think of me. I want you," he said.

"What else am I thinking of?" said Theo.

He made her walk on, and told her about two horses he had seen at the Fields, which he meant to buy as soon as they got there. Theo was very eager about the horses, and talked about nothing else, till, after a long ramble, they came back to the inn, and fellow-passengers, and dirt, and smells; but, in spite of all this, they could not manage to be miserable.

The next morning they started again on their journey in quite a new way, which delighted Theo more than any experience she had had yet. Gerald had made acquaintance with the chief engineer of the line, who had consented to take them and their luggage on in open trucks, over some miles of railway which was not properly made yet, only laid down in a temporary sort of way for carrying material. Sitting on a plank laid across the truck was not exactly comfortable; but who, except Combe, could think of comfort under such circumstances! The wild excitement was positively glorious, of rushing through the air at express speed along a half-made railway-line, with the great open plain stretching all round, and bushes covered with brilliant flowers here and there, and the hills pale blue, shining in the distance. Farther on they went, tearing through a country of more trees, with railway camps here and there, and wild-looking Kafirs in blankets, staring at the train. They had

one long stoppage in the middle of the day, where an engine had gone off the line—no wonder!—and a crowd of Kafirs were working about it lazily, ordered by white men. Gerald and Theo wandered away, and sat down among the rocks a little way off, watching them. Presently she made him come down among the tents and talk to the Kafir women. Some were stalking along with pails of water on their heads, some sitting at the hut-doors, playing with their funny little dark children. They looked up and laughed, and stared at Theo as she walked about among them. They did not understand her, till she tried to comfort one poor thing who was sitting crouched up with a sick baby in her arms. The soft, soothing words of pity, though they were English, seemed to belong somehow to a universal language, and the woman lifted her sad eyes with a sort of gratitude.

After that they climbed into their truck again, and steamed off in a great hurry, for the afternoon was closing in. It was bush country now, dull and lonely, till, by-and-by, it was lighted up with great burning clouds of smoke from bush-fires. Here and there the fires were quite near the line, and dark figures moved about in front of them. As night came on, Gerald made Theo lie down on the floor of the truck, and covered her with rugs, for it was cold; and so through the dusk they went rushing on to the end of their railway journey—a funny little Dutch hotel, with waggons and oxen and mules about it, and railway-works going on, and the bush looking still more dismal under the rising moon. After that long, rattling, tearing day in the open air, they did not want a moonlight walk, and Theo's dreams were not likely to be waking ones. In spite of the room; in spite of the Dutch bed; in spite of the noises in the house, she went to sleep instantly, and slept in perfect peace till three o'clock in the morning.

Then they were roused by the loud blowing of a horn, and half an hour later, after drinking hot coffee in the kitchen, they had scrambled into the cart, and were off—another new kind of travelling. The cart was covered with canvas, and fitted up with five or six seats, one behind the other, all facing the horses. On the box sat the half-caste driver, a wild-looking fellow, who had enough to do to manage his team of eight, some horses and some mules; beside him were two other men, one acting as guard, the other carrying the

long whip, which flew out, cracking and flourishing, at the horses' ears; the luggage was strapped on behind. Gerald had secured the seat behind the box, which was the least cramped, and the easiest to get out of; and so they started in the morning moonlight, dashing along through the bush, jolting, bouncing, plunging, while the three men in front sang together, and the other passengers growled or joked in the background.

That was a curious journey. They outspanned often to change the horses, but very seldom where the passengers could get proper rest and food. It was impossible to sleep in the cart, however tired one might be. If exhaustion made eyelids drop, and brought a momentary forgetfulness, some rut or stone, a tremendous jolt and bump, were sure to wake one up again. Now and then they stopped at a little farm or inn by the wayside, with orange-trees and oleander coming into flower; but here two hours' sleep in some horrid little room was all they had; the horn blew, and the coffee was swallowed scalding, and off they went again over the great desolate plains.

Sometimes they came upon a very picturesque scene—moonlight, perhaps, which made the wide plain look still more boundlessly mysterious, and a Kafir ox-waggon outspanned near the road. All the oxen, with their long horns, lay in a great dark circle; near them a fire was burning; red and yellow flames, and a great waving column of smoke, rose slowly up against the blue, deep sky, and the dark figures of the Kafirs sat round the fire, with their black arms outstretched, singing wild songs to the moon in their soft, melodious voices.

At every outspan Gerald and Theo wandered away from the cart, taking their provisions with them, into the lonely silence of the veldt. These rambles had a charm of their own, which made them look back afterwards on those days of the cart as some of their happiest days. There were not many flowers to be found, for this is a barren country—ice-plants, and iris, and among the bush a shrub with bright red flowers, a sort of azalea; most of the wealth and luxury of wild flowers had been left behind near Cape Town.

One evening, when it was getting dark—it is dark very early there—they had a long, delightful rest near a pool, with frogs ringing their bells, and crickets keeping up a wonderful concert in the bushes. They had a rug with them, and a heap of stones to lean against, and presently Gerald

went to sleep there in the twilight, and Theo sat dreaming and thinking about last year, and London, and her grandmother, and the wonderful way in which her life had changed, so that now she was married, and in Africa, and—she told herself as she turned her head a little, and looked at Gerald—the happiest woman in the world.

The most civilised place they stopped at in this journey was Beaufort, where there really was a little refreshing rest to be had, though only from late in the evening till two in the morning; but it comforted poor Combe, especially, to see gardens and trees once more, and to hear the sound of running water. Then on again, and away over the bare country. Outspans were very frequent, for the team was poor and the road was bad; but though these were waste of time, and generally happened where there was no chance of food or sleep, they were the hours of the day that Gerald and Theo enjoyed most. Their companions in the cart were of a rough kind—Dutch, Germans, Jews, men and women going like themselves to the Fields, and, like themselves, human beings—but this was the only point of contact. It was always a relief to get away from their grumblings and their coarse jokes, only less repulsive than their politeness.

One night there really was an adventure. They had been getting on very slowly all day, had had only one meal, and when night fell they were still some miles short of the farm where they hoped for supper and a few hours' rest. The cart came to a standstill in the middle of the veldt; the horses were taken out and fed for the night, for they could go no farther, and the passengers were informed that they must sleep in the cart or nowhere. Combe resigned herself to her fate; she had made a little friendship with a fat German woman, who was a stranger and unhappy, like herself. Wedged in between this woman and the side of the cart, Combe had reached such a pitch of resignation that she was fairly contented. Her master and mistress had wandered away by themselves, as their manner was. It might be necessary to come back presently and sleep in the cart, but a little peace and fresh air and loneliness must be had first, so they went off together in the moonlight with rugs and biscuits, to look for these in the great blue plain. They sat down under the shelter of a bush. Far off they could see the fire that the driver and his friends

had lighted, where they were boiling their kettle; the voices, and the crackling of the wood, came softened by distance through the quiet air.

"I want to stay here all night, Gerald," said Theo. "We can't go back to the cart; those Jew men are too horrid."

"What, here, out of doors?" said Gerald. "No, I can't let you. It will be too cold."

"But do you know that all my life I have longed to sleep out of doors? And I may never have another opportunity. Before I left London, I told Hugh how much I should like it, and he was shocked—but he is so very civilised, dear old fellow! Soldiers must do those things, though."

"They don't like it, and they don't think it proper for ladies," said Gerald. "There are very few people like you, besides, thoroughly right-down romantic—liking the real thing as much as the idea. The way you have gone through this journey is wonderful to me. Yes, Captain North would never—But you are not miserable, after all!"

"How silly you are!" said Theo softly.

She knew that there was always a little bitterness in Gerald's thoughts of Hugh. It was not to be wondered at, perhaps; but Theo meant it to be driven quite away in time. These two should be friends some day, she was resolved; at present that end seemed a long way off.

"I will not spend the night in that cart," she said. "But to satisfy you, dear—I see a house."

She had been gazing for some minutes across the plain, which was like an enchanted vision, lit up with the glory of the moon. Not very far off there seemed to be a dip in the ground, and beyond that there were trees, and certainly among them there was a faint white glimmer, where walls and windows might be. Theo stood up, and shading her eyes with her hand, as if in the sunshine, looked long and earnestly at this oasis in the plain.

"Yes, it is a house," she said. "Come, let us go and ask them to take us in."

"I don't know what to make of it," said Gerald. "If it was a likely place at all, we should have outspanned there. I'll go and ask Tom the meaning of it."

"No, no; let us go and knock at the door," said Theo; so Gerald threw the rugs over his arm, and they set off across the veldt. It was a rough, scrambling walk; they had to cross a sluit—a dry river-bed—among heaps of stones, and then to climb up its steep bank on the other side; and then

they were soon close upon the trees and the house, a poor-looking little building, with one or two sheds about it, all very bare, with an iron roof that glittered in the moonlight, and blue gum-trees and orange-trees growing by the door. All was very still; there was not a sound of life, not an animal about the place, except a dog that barked and growled inside when Gerald knocked at the door. He knocked for some minutes perseveringly, for he thought that even the floor of a room would be better for Theo than the cramped cart, or the open veldt at this time of the year.

"What do you want?" said a man's voice suddenly, inside the door.

It was a pleasant voice, with a good English accent.

"I want a night's lodging for my wife and myself, if you can kindly give it us," said Gerald.

"Where do you come from, and where are you going?"

"From Cape Town, and we are going to Kimberley. We have outspanned down there across the sluit, and the cart is a bad place to sleep in. You are an Englishman; you will help us, won't you?"

"Sleep out in the veldt; better people than you have done it," said the man more roughly.

"It's rather cold," said Gerald. He looked laughingly at Theo; it was impossible to help it; they were so like beggars at this inhospitable door.

"Go and be stifled, or go and be frozen, whichever you please!" said the man. "I won't forward you on your road to Kimberley. Do you know what will happen to you there?"

"What do you suppose will happen to us?" said Gerald.

"You will lose everything you have, your children will die, your wife will take to drinking, you will follow her example, and by-and-by she will sober you by going out of her mind. Don't say you have had no warning."

He raised his voice, so that it rang out angrily. The effect of the words was strange and awful in that lonely place, where they could not see the speaker, and everything round them was silent and still. It was like one of those terrible voices that used to be heard in the desert, as legends tell us—voices of evil spirits, driving lonely travellers mad with fright. Gerald and Theo stood there in the shadows, while the moon shone, and the

mountains glimmered, bounding the vast plain far away. They looked at each other, and both had turned a little pale. Then suddenly, inside the house, a woman screamed violently once, and began to sob and moan. They heard the man with slow and heavy steps go away from the door.

"Come away," said Gerald, laying his hand on Theo's arm.

This certainly was not the place for a night's rest. They hardly spoke till they had left the dark little group of trees and buildings behind them, and crossed the sluit, and were out again on the wide veldt, where they could see the fire burning, and the horses moving about in the moonlight, and the long canvas cover of the cart, which suddenly looked like home.

The cheerful blaze of that fire was very attractive; there sat their wild, good-humoured driver with his friends, still boiling the kettle, in a yellow glow of light which made the moon look pale. Most of the passengers had stowed themselves away in the cart; they were all in their right minds, as far as they had any. Gerald and Theo sat down near the fire, and Gerald began asking questions about the farm they had just visited. The men laughed at the notion of asking for anything there. They said that the people who lived there were English, and had ruined themselves at the Diamond Fields. The man had told his own story, as Theo had at once guessed. His wife was raving mad now, and constantly trying to destroy herself; he kept her there, alone in that house, and never allowed anyone to come in. As Theo listened, sad and silent, to Gerald's talk with the men, a sort of terror stole over her for the first time; she felt the awfulness of this great country, where evil was so strong and human beings were so helpless and weak.

Presently, as she sat dreaming there, leaning against a stone, Gerald laid a rug over her to keep her from the cold. And then the men began to sing a wild, melancholy song with a chorus, which went on through many verses. And then she knew that Gerald was wrapping the rug more warmly round her; and she half opened her eyes, and saw the yellow flames flickering, and was conscious of a great blue roof, with a light in it, and she fancied that she saw two great white misty wings floating, even higher than that, and she murmured to herself, so that the words just reached Gerald's ear, "God is strong."

And then, strangely enough, she was in London, in her grandmother's house once

more, with the lamp burning dimly ; and she was telling her grandmother about Gerald ; and Lady Redcliff kissed her, which was a wonderful thing, and said, "My pretty Theo !" in her kindest voice ; and Theo laid her head against her knees, but they were very hard.

And so they camped out that night, and she slept still and peacefully with her head on a stone, and Gerald sat all through the hours watching her, till the fire was nearly out, and they were all roused to bustle and confusion in the chill of the early morning.

As they started off for the Fields, with a great blowing of horns, and kicking, and plunging, dashing recklessly down into the sluit, and up the other side, Gerald and Theo looked at that Englishman's lonely house—they passed quite near it now.

"Poor things !" Theo whispered to Gerald. "I wish we could have gone in and comforted them."

He looked at her and smiled ; it was a woman's wish ; and he knew, better than she did, how common such stories were in Africa. She would, indeed, find many to be comforted.

A CRUISE IN THE MOZAMBIQUE.

IN THREE PARTS. PART III.

MY interview with the Queens of Johanna had lasted some considerable time, and conversation had begun to flag when the King and my husband returned to the harem. Sherbet was then brought, which I tasted, but could not drink, it was so mawkishly sweet. A slave then entered in a painfully cringing attitude, bearing a shawl on a salver, which was presented to me kneeling, the King saying the Queen begged I would accept it to lay upon my bed, also a bottle of attar-of-roses. The King promised, should the night be fine and no men allowed to be on deck, to bring his three wives on board the ship to see me, about ten o'clock.

Arrangements were accordingly made for Seydi to receive them at the gangway from the King's own boat. Lanterns were placed all along the deck, right and left, to the after hatchway, a screen was rigged across the deck, abreast of the mainmast, to keep off prying eyes, and refreshments provided, when it came on to pour with rain, preventing their coming, and we were obliged to sail next day for Douany. Notwithstanding the length of my visit, they were most unwilling to part with me,

and looked wistfully into my face as I took an affectionate leave. They were all very young, the eldest certainly not over twenty, and I thought their husband was proud and fond of them, treating them like spoiled darlings, but not as reasoning creatures. The King himself was extremely intelligent and enlightened, and ever a staunch ally to the English. They could all read the Koran, but had no other book, nor did they seem to wish for any. We then paid a visit to Prince Abdullah, who also enquired much for Lady Grey, and as to the health of a curious parrot with which he had presented her. I was sorry not to be able to satisfy him on the latter point. I was also here presented with a bottle of attar. Seydi now took possession, and conveyed us out of the labyrinth till we came in sight of the roadstead, into which the Ariel, fresh from England, was standing. "Plenty pirate now, Lyra outside, Shaitan (Devil) on board," remarked Seydi in the most significant tone, alluding to some of the late proceedings of that remarkable little vessel. Having made this cutting remark, he salaamed himself away, and left us to the enjoyment, I was going to say, of a walk up the hill. But we were closely accompanied by hordes of boys (it was the nearest thing to being hooted out of the town) ; they whooped, screamed, jabbered, and flung up their arms at me, till I hoped they might soon be exhausted. Not at all ; their energies continued unabated long after we had embarked in the galley.

No history of a cruise in the Mozambique would be complete without much mention of the Lyra and her captain. He was an old and valued friend, now dead, worn to the grave by his superhuman energies long before his time. Never has there been before or since so successful a slaver and dhow catcher. The slave trade was paralysed during the latter part of the Lyra's time, and has never revived to its former activity. Her captain was popularly supposed to be made of indiarubber ; he neither ate, slept, nor rested, nor did he suffer anyone else to do so. On many occasions every boat, officer, and man were away cruising, leaving himself, a quartermaster, an engineer, and the dinghy with one boy alone on board. He slept in a chair on deck for an hour in the twenty-four, or took a snooze in the hammock-nettings for five minutes. The ship had been on shore more times than anybody could count during

her researches into unknown little dhow harbours, and I believe her bottom was a perfect sight when she came to be docked on her arrival in England. But a great number of slaves were liberated, and a very large sum of prize-money made. The natives early called him "Shaitan," and feared him accordingly. He told me himself with chuckling delight what happened when the Ariel arrived on the station to relieve the Lyra. There was intense excitement and delight among the slave-drivers, and at the barracoons; they had got rid at last of this Shaitan, who had harried them for long years, divined their vile plans, and invariably outwitted them (no mean triumph); and as the ship sailed away, bound to the Cape, beacon-fires were flashed from hill-top to mountain-side, along hundreds of miles of African coast, signifying to all whom it might concern that the scourge was gone. Next morning they were more convinced than ever that it was the devil in person, for there was the dreaded Shaitan, whom they had seen sailing away in his ship, now landing from the Ariel! The explanation of it was that he had exchanged with her captain, who had gone home in the Lyra in his place.

Early in the morning, before going to sea, we landed at the watering-place, where a seemingly sparkling stream tumbled down a little declivity. I only hoped the ship's clothes had not been washed in that stream nearer its source! Climbing a long green slope to the very highest point above the town, we sat down for shelter from the rain in the long stiff grass under an umbrella. As I was wet through by this time, we took a nearer way down a sort of ladder, cut in the face of the mountain, till, reaching the bottom, we were taken possession of as before, and conducted to the shore. Not liking to wait for our boat on account of being so wet, we chartered a canoe to take us off. A—— and I, with two men, one of whom sat on the very end of the outrigger to keep our balance, made it rather a tight squeeze. I felt afraid to wink, or blow my nose, for fear of capsizing.

It was rather a ridiculous sight, when one of our cutters going on shore for the officers passed us, to see them toss their oars to a soaked and draggled individual paddling in a canoe. Getting out of it was a ticklish matter, the ship was light and well out of water; however, I clambered up, to be received with an expression of kind anxiety by the doctor, and unlimited

proposals of quinine, etc. However, no ill effects came from that wetting. The Queen sent me word that she was more than sorry it had been too wet for them to come, but hoped to pay us a visit when next we came in. That time never arrived. She sent me a large, flat, scented flower, smelling of lotus and stephanotis, which she had woven together for perfuming my drawers. The scent in our cabin was so unbearably powerful, however, that after four days' endurance, I was obliged to consign it to the deep.

It would be pleasant cruising for a yacht between these islands, all being safe of approach, with clear passages between. Mohilla was our next anchorage, bringing up opposite the brown, dull-looking little town of Douany. A remarkably long, narrow building, looking like casemated barracks, occupies the central position; it is, however, the Queen's palace and mosque. A large canoe, with a red and blue flag in the bows, was soon seen coming off to us with a message from the Queen; "She had a salute ready, and was anxious to see me; she was glad to hear I had come." A state visit was paid to her majesty by my husband and the consul alone, the first day, to arrange slave-trade affairs, which had been somewhat "disorganised" of late. At four I landed. Mohilla is the smallest and lowest of the Comoros, about nineteen hundred feet high, and cultivated up to the very tops of the hills. The landing is in a cove; at low water boats cannot come within two hundred and fifty yards of the shore, the beach is so flat. Crowds of people met us, all gaping and laughing—at me, apparently. We were conducted into the town by Drayman Cham, a Mohilla chief, through a small door in the wall, which, like at Johanna, surrounds the town. In the courtyard of the Queen's palace stood a company of Mohilla soldiers with flint matchlocks and spears. The word of command was shouted in English, and they presented arms as we passed by in quite a civilised manner, evidently learned from the French, who have long had an eye to the undivided possession of Mohilla. We were taken through a long, narrow, bare room, and up some steps like those of a hayloft, with a trap-door at the top. At the farther end of a narrow chamber, similar to the one below, stood the Queen, surrounded by chiefs and crouching slaves. We sat, one on each side of her, with several naval officers, and rows of great men on chairs all down the room. The Queen is

short, with pretty, gazelle-like eyes and white teeth; judging by her hands she was of a very light colour, but she wore a kind of yashmack, or black and gold embroidered face-cover, and was enveloped in a heavy gold and silver shawl, like a bundle of clothes. She spoke French well, but after saying she was pleased to see me, and making a few enquiries, she relapsed into a state of dignified repose, and only spoke in reply to our conversation. She is a niece of Radama the First, a former and very powerful king of Madagascar, and is supposed to be an independent queen, but the French governor of the neighbouring island of Mayotta has always had a great deal to say on all state matters connected with Mohilla. The Queen told me that she had a French governess for ten years, with whom she lived entirely, I think at Réunion. She is married to a high-caste Zanzibar Arab, who was at that time under a temporary cloud—whether political, social, or marital did not appear, but was soon to be brought back again to his spouse. She had two children, cheerless-looking little bodies, whose aged though baby faces looked strangely wanting in the fun and spirits of childhood; besides, they were so swathed in stiff clothes that I doubt if they could run about comfortably. Much of her majesty's conversation was about her coffee and spice gardens, which she wished us to see. She had great natural dignity, and quite gave one the idea of having been born in the purple. We then took a ceremonious leave, and with a soldier marching before and one behind us, went out into the country, under groves of cocoanut and spice trees, to the gardens. Our guard wore caps like a bishop's mitre, of ancient Egyptian pattern, I have since learned, with the crescent and star in red, and coats of red baize, tied in at the waist with a white girdle; a spear and shield completed their costume, the latter not wholly unnecessary, inasmuch as no sort of garment clothed their athletic black limbs. Drayman Cham here again met us, to offer coffee and cakes, served in a sort of summer-house. I asked why the Queen did not remove her yashmack on receiving me? "Because she got plenty pimple on her nose," was the reply. It was for this ailment, I suppose, that she requested that our surgeon might visit and prescribe for her, which he did, to our great surprise, but we supposed that so long a residence among the French must have emancipated

her from many foolish Moslem prejudices. At night a bullock came off as a present to the ship, also a quantity of cocoanuts, always a treat to the men.

Comoro, the largest island of the group, was our next place of call. Coasting along, Seydi Drayman, who was still on board, named the villages and points to me, also anything remarkable connected with them. Passing the south-west point of Comoro by daylight, we had no chance of seeing the sulphureous vapours which issue from volcanic cracks in the ground. Passing ships often take them for the lights of a vessel closer in shore. We passed quite near a projecting black point of scorious lava, which was formed by the eruption of 1858, and was not in the charts. It seemed so curious to make discoveries in a new and unsurveyed world. "Plenty devil here," remarked Seydi in his brusque way. "What are they like?" enquired my husband. "Good-looking fellows!" "Oh, you English no believe devil," said he with impatience. "But I speakee for true. S'pose you pass Comoro at night in dhow, you see thousand lights on shore, now here, now far away. Plenty devil. You no believe? When man fall down, you say he got a fit. Dat not true. Devil strike him; he fall down. My mother slave, walk along at night; a great strong devil lie across the path; they fight; slave throw devil down and keep him down till day. When peoples come by they find slave on his face, his hands buried in the ground. Devil gone. That for true!" "Oh yes, Seydi," said my husband; "that happens very often in our country, too. Men found on their faces, having seen devil. Too much rum." Seydi turned away with a gesture of annoyance at our incredulity.

Passing the cheerless, brown-looking town of Itzando, we steamed gingerly into Maroni, the consul ahead in the cutter to pilot us. The whole island is nearly steep-to; large ships could brush the trees on shore with their yards without touching the bottom. We picked out a berth as close to the iron-bound shores as it seemed advisable to go, and even then we had to let go the anchor in twenty-five fathoms. I thought the cable would never finish running out. My husband and the consul went to palaver with the Sultan Amadi, of Maroni, on the subject of the slave-trade, while Lieutenant A. went with me to see the town.

An individual with a long wand, in semi-soldierly attire, was told off to show

me the sights, and two soldiers marched behind and before us. The wand was not at all unnecessary, for the inhabitants of this place had never before seen a white woman, and were exceedingly anxious to prove by touch whether I was of the same flesh and blood as themselves. Mr. A. and I agreed that their gestures, and indeed, almost horror, at my appearance, were far from being complimentary. As we walked through the little, narrow, dirty lanes, comprising the great thoroughfares, we were yelled, hooted, and screamed at in the most friendly way by hundreds of men, women, and children. The women came to the doors of their houses, caught sight of me, and fled with a scream of astonishment. We were taken into two harems, to visit our guide's relations, and I was assured they considered I was not so bad as might have been expected. The women in this town seemed to have far more freedom—I suppose owing to a plentiful admixture of Malagasy blood and less of the Arab—than in the other towns we visited. Seydi was a great potentate here, and a haughtiness came into his demeanour, previously unknown; crowds of people kissed his hand, which he held out to them in a magnificent manner, tempered with deepest scorn. A convention was also made with the chief of Itzanda and an unsuccessful attempt to restore peace between the two towns, Itzanda and Maroni, who were at deadly feud, battles being fought, and many people killed, at the very slightest provocation. They are particularly clever in the Oriental habit of lying, and were profuse in their innocence of slaving practices, in the face of two poor slaves having swam off to the ship about ten p.m., naked, scored with lashes, and quite exhausted. They had escaped from the dhow lying on the beach inside the little creek, which had been represented to us as an island trader; but which turned out to have landed a cargo of slaves from the African main at Maroni three days before our arrival.

The peak of Comoro is most remarkable, smooth, and dome-shaped, with so few undulations that it is difficult to believe it is eight thousand feet in height; it shows better about fifty miles off, but we saw it remarkably clearly defined, quite a hundred miles distant. It is the highest mountain in the world as compared with the size of the island, which is only about thirty miles by twelve. Eruptions fre-

quently occur; in 1858 the lava poured in a gigantic broad black flood, carrying everything before it, mid-way between the two belligerent towns, situated only three miles apart, frightening the respective inhabitants nearly out of their wits. Comoro is sometimes called Angezacha. Its interior is wholly unexplored and unknown, principally owing to its possessing absolutely no harbour, and not even a decent anchorage. We brought up in twenty-five fathoms, one and a half cable from the rocks, with only just room to swing, and the bottom was very foul. Comoro is, besides, far less fertile, owing to being actively volcanic, than the other islands; the peak is quite bare of vegetation. The native government is split up into many districts, each possessing an independent sultan. The result appears to be a state of perpetual war, and its natural outcome, poverty and decay. The inhabitants are a fine race, of remarkable stature, resembling the Hovas of Madagascar, with whom they are connected by an intermixture of blood. Water is exceedingly scarce and bad, cattle cheap and plentiful.

We steamed from Comoro to Mayotta, the currents in light winds being so extraordinarily strong as to set you miles away from where you are supposed to be by the reckoning. A French man-of-war arrived at Johanna, which had been swept away in a calm, and carried completely round Mohilla, taking six days about it. Mayotta, the fourth island of this group, is surrounded by a reef, in many places ten or eleven miles from the main island. It is approached through a bewildering labyrinth of winding passages between the reefs, but is excellently buoyed. The island is very uneven, with quantities of sugarloaf peaks of volcanic origin. It is now a French colony, a small force of sailors and soldiers being maintained at Zaudzi. The population vastly exceeds that of the other islands, numbering with slaves eight thousand people, and, also unlike the others, it is very unhealthy, mainly owing to mangrove swamps. The French people compare it to Senegal. The circle of reefs round Mayotta have at least fourteen passages through them; in calm weather the coral patches are only to be seen by the discoloration of the water, and the currents being so strong, unless a bright look-out is kept, you drift upon them before any danger is suspected. It was on one of these outlying reefs that H.M.S. *Enchantress*, formerly the celebrated

slaver *Manuela*, prize to the *Brisk*, was lost, three months before our arrival. After being condemned she was bought into the Navy as a store-ship, and lost on her first tour of service, because she sailed so fast that it was thought impossible she could have run the distance, when she struck heavily eleven miles from the shore, to all appearance far out in the open sea, and became a total wreck. The French saved her sails and some valuables, which we shipped on our arrival. Mayotta numbers several islands; Zambourou, Pamanzi, and Zandzi being the most important. On the north end of Pamanzi there is a remarkable lake of great depth, the crater, apparently, of an extinct volcano. The French establishment on Zandzi comprises a governor and various officials, who live in capital solid houses. Slave labour is cheap. We were received with much kindness and hospitality by the governor, a kindly little yellow man in spectacles and a blue dressing-gown, who had worn out both vigour and digestion in the colonial service of France; that did not, however, prevent his giving us an excellent French breakfast of eighteen courses, very little of which he touched himself. We were to have gone to the important French settlement of Nos Beh, Madagascar, on leaving Mayotta, but time did not allow of it, to our great regret, as it is here in particular the French have established themselves, spreading out their grasp on Madagascar, north and south, from their stronghold on this most valuable little island; so we ran through the great Zambourou channel, and so out into the open sea, bound for the Cape.

Before leaving Pomony, we took on board a little Johanna cow, with a hump, and its calf, in the vain hope of milk for breakfast. But the middle watch is long. What are the midshipmen to do with themselves all night in fine weather, save to milk the cow? The men also had a fine frolic on deck, haymaking and airing the cow's provender. The hump of these little Brahminy cattle is the delicacy, and, when salted and pressed, is remarkably good.

When nearing the African coast on our way south, great excitement was caused off Memba Bay by the appearance of a brigg-rigged vessel right ahead. Visions of another glorious prize to be captured glowed before our eyes, causing every nerve to be strained in hopes of gaining upon her; and gain upon her we certainly did, but only, slowly and unwillingly, to discover, as our chase lifted out of the sea,

that she was a white detached rock, so exactly the shape of a brig under sail, slightly heeling over, as to deceive the most experienced eye for several hours.

It was a glorious anniversary with the ship, and we hoped history was about to repeat itself. On the same day in the previous August, when on passage from the Cape, about sixty miles from Johanna, the *Brisk* sighted a sail ahead about eleven o'clock in the morning. She was afterwards lost sight of for a couple of hours in the noonday haze, though sailing and steaming hard directly for her. She was again made out on the weather bow, having altered her course. Going full speed ahead, she was slowly come up with, and made out to be a clipper ship, a low, black, rakish hull, with a great deal of sheer, and a perfect crowd of studding-sails and stay-sails on every available place. The chase kept bearing away, in hopes of escaping by outsailing us, that being her best point. Sir Henry Keppel, whose flag was flying at the mizen, spent the best part of the day in the rigging with his telescope, regardless of the blazing sun, excited as a boy, and charmed beyond measure at such a splendid piece of luck. Speke and Grant, the celebrated travellers, who were also on board, en route for Zanzibar, shared in the general enthusiasm. After chasing her all the long summer's day, till the engine-room was nearly red-hot, and the poor stokers had to be supported up the engine-room hatchway in a fainting state, the *Brisk* ran up alongside her at sundown, and, firing a gun to heave her to, a couple of boats, well-armed, Lieutenant Adeane in command, dropped on board and took possession. Just before boarding, her crew were observed to heave something heavy overboard—afterwards found to have been her logs and colours. She had a cargo of no fewer than eight hundred and forty-six slaves on board, and no papers or colours to produce. Her name was the *Manuela*, formerly *Sunny South*, a Rio packet. Her hull resembled that of the celebrated yacht *America* on a large scale, and her sails were of beautiful snow-white cotton. The slaves had only been shipped a couple of days before, between Cape Delgado and Ibo, and she thought she was safely off, bound to Cuba. She had a captain, three mates, a doctor, pilot, carpenter, boat-swain, and forty men, of most ruffianly appearance, chiefly Spaniards and Manila men. Her captain was of the type

depicted by Marryat — wily, intelligent, suave, with the heart of a Judas. He presented his sword to his captor with an elegant bow, like a hero of old, who, having fought well till the ship was riddled and sinking, gave in to superior strength, and considered himself in the interesting light of an unfortunate but conquered foe. Altogether, it was slavery on a magnificent scale quite unknown in these waters. She was the largest slaver ever taken in the Mozambique Channel, measuring seven hundred and two tons.

The *Manuela* was taken into Pomony, till her prize-crew were on board, and the necessary arrangements and disposition of her crew made. The captain and mates were taken on board the *Brisk*, for fear of plots for recapture, and the crew put in irons. The slaves were healthy, but the stench from them intolerable, notwithstanding that the slave-deck was seven feet high, and remarkably well ventilated. When quietly at anchor in Pomony, the slaves were all got up from below, one by one, to count them and describe their sex, and when all were on deck, huddled together like sheep in a great black mass, the prize crew set to work to clean the slave-deck. Several of the officers and men were sick while at work, so utterly horrible was the odour. Being already watered and provisioned for one hundred and five days, millet-seed being the staple food, she was soon off for Mauritius, where the slaves were first landed on Flat Island, the quarantine-ground, and then hired out to sugar-planters. Six months after, when she came to the Cape, I visited her. Though every exertion had been made to disinfect and cleanse her, the smell of the slaves remained nearly as pungent as when they were on board. The vessel was lost, as previously mentioned, on the Mayotta reef. The *Mannela's* capture by the *Brisk* was a bitter disappointment to the *Lyra*, who had, by almost supernatural aid, learned all about the expected arrival of a magnificent slaver; she had hovered off the coast on watch for weeks, only to see her snapped up by the *Brisk*, who fell in with her quite by chance, while making a passage. The prize-money paid was very large.

Continuing our voyage to the Cape, five dhows were seen in the morning; one of them ran in behind the islands near Mamba Bay, which looked suspiciously like trying to evade us, the other four remaining in line of battle, as valiantly as possible, con-

scious of their (present) innocence. When boarded they were full of rice, and had Colonel Rigby's pass, so we were compelled to let them go. A Mozambique dhow is the most unseaworthy craft conceivable; they have high sterns and curious sharp bows, with one large sail on a yard. As a rule they can neither beat nor stay, but they run up and down with the prevailing monsoon, and so manage to make some sort of a passage. One dark night a large vessel was reported right ahead. She suddenly disappeared in the gloom, and may have been a slaver, but she was put down as the Flying Dutchman, bringing us bad weather. Passing close to Barrow Hill, Inhambane, I thought I had never seen so bleak, inhospitable, and desolate a spot, and wondered why such a place should remain, for long years, a bone of contention between the English and Portuguese. From St. John's Gates to the Cape we had nothing but hard gales; so when, after an absence of six months, we took up our moorings in Simon's Bay, I had indeed reached the haven where I would be.

TOGETHER.

THE winter wind is wailing, sad and low,
Across the lake and through the rustling sedge;
The splendour of the golden after-glow,
Gleams through the blackness of the great yew hedge;
And this I read on earth and in the sky—
"We ought to be together, you and I."
Rapt through its rosy changes into dark,
Fades all the west; and through the shadowy trees,
And in the silent uplands of the park,
Creeps the soft sighing of the rising breeze;
It does but echo to my weary sigh,
"We ought to be together, you and I."
My hand is lonely for your clasping, dear,
My ear is tired, waiting for your call;
I want your strength to help, your laugh to cheer,
Heart, soul, and senses need you, one and all.
I droop without your full frank sympathy—
We ought to be together, you and I.
We want each other so, to comprehend
The dream, the hope, things planned, or seen, or wrought;
Companion, comforter, and guide, and friend,
As much as love asks love, does thought need thought.
Life is so short, so fast the lone hours fly—
We ought to be together, you and I.

MARDON HALL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

ONE day Mr. Dallas said to me, when he had come into the garden from his painting:
"Nancy, I am going to ask you a great favour. I wonder what your answer will be."

"It will be 'Yes,'" I said, looking down

at him from my step-ladder, on which I stood training a white clematis against a trellis.

"You are very kind," he said, "to promise blindfold. I am going to ask you to let me put you into a picture."

"Me, Mr. Dallas!" I cried, dropping my bundle of matting and my scissors. "You want to paint me! And why?"

"And why not?" he asked, handing me back the things I had let fall. "Why do you exclaim so?"

But I could only ejaculate, while I felt a crimson flush spread from the roots of my hair to my collar:

"Paint me, Mr. Dallas! But it isn't worth your while!"

"Well," he answered, looking straight at me, as if to see what I really felt, "if you had rather not, we will say no more about it; but I think it is very well worth my while. You see now," he went on, laughing, "what it is to promise before knowing what you commit yourself to."

I split a bit of matting, and split it again and again, till it was frayed to a mere thread, and then I said:

"I didn't mean to say I had any objection; I only meant that I should make a very ugly picture."

He laughed.

"I'll answer for the picture," he said, "if you don't mind giving me two or three sittings. Think it over, and tell me this evening," he added, as he turned away.

Then a sudden idea seemed to strike him, and he came back from the doorway to say:

"I wish to paint you just as you are now, in that blue dress, with your hair all rough—not brushed down as you have it in the house."

Then he went back to his work, and I, although my clematis was sadly in want of my attention, came down from my ladder with a spring, and in two minutes I was in my little bedroom, with the door locked behind me. I heard Aunt Libby's voice from below, crying:

"Gracious me, child! Nancy, what's the matter? Can't you learn to go quietly? You give me quite a turn the way you tear about."

But I didn't answer. I was before the little square of wavy mirror, which gave me such uncertain information about the parting of my hair and the set of my collars, with my elbows on the chest-drawers, and my face between my hands, my thumbs meeting under my chin, looking

hard at my own distorted image, and saying in a happy whisper to myself:

"He wants to paint me—me! What am I like that made him think of it—to paint me?"

It seemed incredible that there could be anything in my looks or figure to have given him the idea; and yet there must be some charm that no one had noticed before, for he was not easy to please about women's faces. He had shown me some rough sketches of heads, and they had all been very beautiful; surely I wasn't like one of those. "But anyway," I mused as I still stood looking at myself, "he has added me to the number of the people he thinks worth spending his time over." That was a distinction which my wildest castle-building in the air would never have ventured on.

I seemed when I came down to supper that evening—with my hair untouched, since he had found it better so—as if I were treading on air, and as if life were full of new, glad surprises.

"Well, Nancy," said Mr. Dallas, "to be or not to be—I mean your picture?"

"Oh, sir," I said, my voice almost failing me with delight, "if you want to paint a picture of me, I'm sure you're more than welcome to try."

Which seemed to me rather an awkward way of expressing myself, but for all that was the best I could do.

When Aunt Libby saw my uncombed locks and morning frock, she said with some severity, to show me that even the presence of a stranger could not screen such untidiness from blame:

"Well, Nancy, considering the time you have been upstairs, you might have made yourself a little more fit to be seen; your hair looks as if it hadn't seen a comb since first thing this morning."

I scarcely slept at all that night. The thought of sitting or standing for Mr. Dallas to draw me, and then paint me, kept me wide awake until the pale light began to stream in through my little window, and the clock in the kitchen below my room struck four. Then I got up softly and dressed, and stole downstairs and out of doors. I wanted to look at the place which Mr. Dallas had told me he had thought of for the scene of my picture. I was to be standing at the bottom of the terrace-steps, coming to the garden with my head half turned as if someone had just called me from under the yew-trees that grew along the terrace. I stood for a few minutes

practising myself, as it were, and then I sat down. The dew lay thick upon the grass and flowers, and on the jessamine that climbed round the stone balustrade—each dewdrop sparkled like a diamond in the sunbeams that peeped through the elm-trees, while in the shadows the ground looked as if a silver gauze were spread over it. The birds were awake and had begun to sing, and the bees had got to work in the limes and among the roses.

When I had sat on the steps for about half an hour, the fresh morning air, after my wakeful night, overcame me, and I sank into a deep sleep. When I woke, the sun, instead of peeping at me from between the elms, stood high in the sky, the dew was all dried off, and the birds were only twittering.

The umbrella belonging to Mr. Dallas's easel was propped up on the steps to shelter me from the heat, and he himself was standing not far off with a sketch-book in his hand.

"Why, Nancy," he said, as I awoke and exclaimed at finding I had slept so long, "they all thought you were lost, and your aunt has been in despair; but I guessed you would be in the garden, and I have been making my first study of you without your knowing anything of it. Are you angry with me for having stolen a march on you?"

I was so bewildered that I never thought of thanking him for the umbrella. I sat up, rubbed my eyes, put on my hat, which had fallen off, and said:

"Will you show me what you have drawn, sir, please?"

When he gave it me I quite screamed with delight. I looked so different from my reflection in the wavy mirror, and so different from anything I had ever fancied myself to be.

"You like it?" he asked.

"I should think I did!" I exclaimed; "but I shouldn't have known it was me."

"It is not always given to us," he answered, "to see ourselves as others see us; only the general error is the reverse of yours."

"I don't understand you, sir," I said, looking hard at him to catch his meaning.

"Never mind, Nancy," he said, smiling, as he often did when his words puzzled me; "never mind understanding me, but go in and get some breakfast, or you'll have no strength to stand on these steps for an hour this afternoon."

"Shall you begin to-day, sir?" I asked.

"Yes, yes," he answered; "make hay while the sun shines, and paint portraits, too, if it happens to be your substitute for haymaking."

And so my picture was begun. I was so proud of being considered worth painting that I forgot to feel tired by standing so long in one attitude, and I was quite annoyed when the bell called me for the first time that day to go and show the house.

"I'm so sorry," I said apologetically; "but, you see, I must go."

"Never mind," said Mr. Dallas; "you couldn't have stood much longer, so we are only interrupted a few minutes sooner."

"Oh yes, I could have gone on," I answered confidently; "I could have stood there another hour or two."

"You think so," he said, as he walked with me across the courtyard; "but I shouldn't like you to have done such a hard afternoon's work for me."

For him! That was just what would have made it quite easy—quite pleasant for me. How I wished he knew what a delight it was to me to do the smallest thing at his desire!

I found two ladies waiting to see the house. They were so much alike that I saw at a glance they were sisters. Both were handsome and distinguished-looking, but the younger was much the more striking of the two. She was very tall and noble in appearance. No one could fail to notice the grace of her movements at first sight even. I can see her still, if I close my eyes and look back into my old memories, as plainly as if I had had a picture of her to look at all these years, since the day I first saw her at Mardon. Her head was small and beautifully set on her slender neck. I could see masses of golden hair under her broad hat with its long, sweeping feathers, and little, dancing curls peeped out on her temples and about her delicate ears. Her eyebrows and eyelashes were much darker than her hair, which gave still more depth to her lustrous brown eyes. All her features were lovely, but the expression of her face was more lovely still, so full of happiness and life, and yet so peaceful! It was altogether what you might call a radiant look that she had, as if a light within her shone out and met the sunshine outside her.

I suppose it was my acquaintance with Mr. Dallas, and what I had learnt from him, that gave me the power to see how

very beautiful this lady was. I looked almost involuntarily towards him, half in curiosity, half in fear, to see what impression this wonderful face and figure made on him as I led the ladies into the courtyard where he stood. To my great astonishment I saw his eyes light up with pleasure and recognition.

"This is indeed a pleasant surprise!" he exclaimed, coming forward quickly, and shaking hands in a very friendly manner. "Who would have thought of meeting you here?"

"It is very pleasant, certainly," said the elder lady as they shook hands; "but the surprise is your own private property. We knew you were here painting, and so we thought we would come and look you up."

"How very kind of you!" answered Mr. Dallas; "but where have you come from? I have been fancying you, Lady Doris, in town, paying and receiving visits, and dancing, and drinking afternoon-tea, and all the rest of it."

As he spoke he turned to the younger lady.

"Ah," she said gaily, "your imagination has played you false for once. Helen besought me to come here with her before I went to town, and my feelings of humanity couldn't resist her appeal. I didn't want her to die of ennui while my brother-in-law is devoting himself to trout-fishing."

"Oh," said Mr. Dallas, "then Colonel St. Quentin has come here for some fishing?"

"Yes," said the elder lady, whom her sister had called Helen; "my worthy better-half felt that he could not face six weeks or two months of London season without having a fortnight's seclusion in the wilderness; so we are staying at The Peacock at Bankwell, and, as Doris tells you, I begged her to come and keep me alive. The Duchess told us that you were here, so we felt we should not be quite alone on our desert island."

"And we shall have the privilege of a very private view, too; shan't we, Mr. Dallas?" said Lady Doris. "We shall be before even the people you admit to your studio."

"Yes," put in Lady Helen; "we shall intrude on you unmercifully, because, you know, you always like people about you when you are painting, and watching you will be a never-failing resource while the Colonel is whipping the Brend."

"I hope you will come a great deal to Mardon, Lady Helen," said Mr. Dallas; "you know you couldn't intrude on me,

that would be impossible. It will be delightful to have you."

He looked towards Lady Doris as he spoke.

"You are very polite, I am sure," said Lady Helen; "isn't he, Doris?"

"Very," said Lady Doris, smiling back at Mr. Dallas. "I suppose you are getting rather bored here all alone, aren't you? And we are, at least, a little reminder that society still exists."

"Oh, I'm not bored in the least," he said. "On the contrary, I'm enjoying myself immensely, and shall be very sorry when I have to go away. Your coming is just the last touch of pleasure—everything is quite perfect now."

"Well, certainly," said Lady Helen, "you haven't forgotten your pretty manners in the country. Where are you staying?"

"Oh, I have most delightful quarters at the farmhouse close by," he answered.

"Ah, I expect, Helen," said Lady Doris, looking at her sister, "that Mr. Dallas has been making great advances in the favour of the aborigines, and carrying all hearts by storm."

I didn't know what aborigines meant, but I concluded it stood for us at the farm, for Mr. Dallas said pleasantly:

"They have been very kind to me, not for any other reason, I believe, but because they are most hospitable people—ah, Miss Nancy!"

I thought it was very nice of him to speak so well of us, but I went so hot and red at being spoken to, that I couldn't find any answer to make before Lady Helen said:

"Well, I suppose as we've come to Mardon we must go through the house, or the poor, dear Duke will never forgive us, unless you can tell us enough, Mr. Dallas, to enable us to keep up a conversation with him without betraying ourselves."

It would be impossible for me to say how much Lady Helen impressed me by calling his grace "the poor, dear Duke;" it had never before entered my head that there could be anyone to whom the Duke was not the greatest and most unapproachable of human beings.

"Oh, you must see the house," answered Mr. Dallas. "Come along, it is well worth seeing, and perhaps you'll let me be showman."

"Oh, do, do!" they both said; and Lady Helen added, turning towards me where I stood a little way off; "I do not think we need trouble you, my good girl."

She spoke exactly as she would have spoken to a servant—with perfect courtesy, but still as if I were infinitely beneath her, which of course I was. I felt angry with her, but did not exactly know why.

"Oh yes," answered Mr. Dallas, "you will want Miss Nancy to manage that great bunch of keys—no trifle, I can tell you, when you are on the dark side of a door; and she'll tell you when there are four steps of stair, and when there are ten, at the end of a dusky passage, and when to turn to the right to avoid a trap-door in the floor, and when to bend to save your bonnets, not to mention your heads. I assure you I wouldn't be responsible to Colonel St. Quentin for your persons, Lady Helen, if you had no better guide than me. Now, Nancy!"

So I went with them, but Mr. Dallas didn't tell any of his wonderful stories, and the ladies didn't pay much attention to what they saw. They seemed to have so much to say to one another as they went along. Lady Helen talked the most; I dare say because she was older and the married one, but I noticed that when Mr. Dallas answered her, he addressed most of what he said to Lady Doris, and I saw that he looked at her a great deal, which did not surprise me, because she was so beautiful; nevertheless, I could not bear to see his eyes constantly upon her, as if he were watching for every word and every look from her.

Both ladies were very much charmed with the ballroom.

"My dear Doris," Lady Helen exclaimed, the moment she went into it, "what a length, and what a floor! What a room for dancing! The Duchess ought to give a ball here; it is a positive sin not to use such a room."

"Yes," said Lady Doris, "it's quite dreadful to think of the cooped-up places one dances in sometimes in London, while such a room as this is shut up and left. What a pity we can't pack it up and take it with us to town the week after next!"

"You should try and persuade the Duchess to give a ball here," said Mr. Dallas; "I don't suppose it would be impossible. It should be a fancy ball of Old England, and we would have no dances but minuets and sarabands, and giguees, and that kind of thing; it would be quite original."

"So it would," said Lady Doris; "but we should take an age to learn all those old dances. and by the time we knew

them we shouldn't find it very original to come down here and dance them."

"Now, Mr. Dallas," cried Lady Helen, "you must be good enough to show us what you have painted, and what you are painting, and what you are intending to paint; I am overcome with curiosity to see."

So he took them first into the garden and showed them the picture on the easel.

"Oh, you are painting the little *château-laine*," exclaimed Lady Helen; "how very charming—how very picturesque! Really it is wonderful how an artistic rendering idealises that sort of figure. Look, Doris, how well the attitude carries out the expression of the face."

Lady Doris looked pleased with the picture.

"I think it is a very happy idea," she said; "I expect this picture will make quite a sensation."

It amazed me to hear them speak of my picture like that, as if I had nothing to do with it. I fancied Mr. Dallas was painting my likeness, and it had never entered my head that I was merely a figure in an artist's fancy.

"I'm glad you like it," he said, "for you really gave me the idea of this; don't you remember what you said when you saw my study for *A Broken Spell*?"

Lady Doris smiled, and Mr. Dallas went on:

"My other pictures, or rather sketches, are in the house; if you don't mind the trouble of coming to my sitting-room, I should like to hear what you think of them."

"We will come with pleasure," said Lady Helen, "and then you can tell your people not to get your dinner ready, for Colonel St. Quentin said we were to be sure and bring you back to eat some trout."

"Thank you," said Mr. Dallas, "I shall be very happy;" and I saw that Lady Doris looked very happy, too.

When they had fairly gone, and I could hear their voices no longer, a feeling of anger, which had taken possession of me the moment I saw Mr. Dallas's pleasure at the appearance of these ladies, quite overcame me, and I sat down on the terrace-steps, and cried bitterly.

Who were they, I thought, that they should come and take him away from me, and from his painting, and leave me all alone like I was before he came? Scarcely an hour of the day had passed, while he had been at Mardon, that I had not seen him. and talked with him: and now for

hours and hours I must think of him as talking to Lady Helen and looking at Lady Doris. Most likely I should not see him again till the next morning, and my tears flowed afresh at the thought of such a separation. And what was to prevent the same thing from happening over and over again? They would often come to Mardon, and they would often take him away with them. He had so identified himself with us in the last few weeks that it seemed to me as if he belonged to us entirely, and as if these old friends of his, who had known him intimately before I had heard of him, had come to do me a great injury, and to rob me. Then why had they spoken of my picture so—just as if I were a house, or a tree in a painting? That vexed me almost more than anything. And so I sat on, and cried, in the same place where I had felt so happy and elated in the early morning. It was the first time I had ever compared my feelings of the present and of the past together, and it seemed to me as if life could not contain a sharper contrast than lay between that May morning and afternoon.

That evening at supper, my father said:

"It seems quite dull without Mr. Dallas, don't it, Nancy? And you're all dumpish-like, too; are you pining after him?" and he laughed, as if it were quite a joke.

"She's been out of sorts all day," Aunt Libby said, by way of explanation. "Mr. Dallas found her asleep on the terrace-steps this morning, and she's eaten nothing. You'd better go to bed, child."

I didn't want twice telling to go upstairs, but when I got into my room, I didn't undress. I opened the window, and leant out to watch for Mr. Dallas. I had listened a long, long time when I heard his step coming quickly along the park. He was whistling softly as he came. When he was in the house I felt happier, and I went to bed to sleep off my first trouble, and to dream that Mr. Dallas told Lady Helen that he would rather never go out to dinner any more than make me so unhappy.

OUR SHINING RIVER.

VII.

THE charm of Abingdon, which overrides the first impression of its quiet, sleepy dullness, is in its unchangeableness, giving the visitor the impression of a town which for any odd or even number of centuries

has retained pretty much its present appearance. There has been growth; there has also been decay; and the regular recurrence of painting, whitewashing, repairing, scrubbing, and cleaning has made some minor alterations in the course of ages, while keeping the place up to the mark as a going concern. The great buildings of the abbey have, indeed, disappeared, but as you pass under the fine mediæval gateway into the quiet precinct, you think that things have not greatly changed since the days when King Henry the Eighth's commissioners, having driven away the monks and sold the materials of the church, left the rest of the place to gradual decay. For the bit of the abbey that is left, which is said to be the abbey dormitory, is just as the monks must have left it, allowing for natural decay. The custodian of the building is a civil young man in a white apron—the young man who bottles, and fines, and generally acts as cellarman to the wine-merchant who occupies the buildings—the cellars being the crypt and underground receptacles of the old abbey. And so by a creaking, decrepit, wooden stair—but the original wooden staircase, down which the sleepy monks would crawl, rubbing their eyes as the solemn-toned bell called them to primes or lauds—by this winding staircase, with its solid oaken newel, we reach the floor above. Partitions, joists have disappeared, and the flooring has crumbled in here and there, but the stout timbers, the strong roof, all that forms the skeleton of the old building, is still intact, and up the long passages into which all the dormitories opened, the wine-merchant's young man leads us with confident steps, and so brings us into an apartment of more pretensions, which he calls the abbot's parlour, with its noble ruined hearth, where the stain of the smoke still remains from the lordly faggots that once blazed in its hospitable, cavernous mouth. Outside, too, is the stone landing-place and balustrade—the carved wooden balusters still in their sockets, and leaning this way and that—that formed the perron of this chamber of honour, giving access to it from the outside. After lasting a few centuries without repair, the stone steps have given way, and we have to work our way back to the wooden staircase. To hazard a guess one would say that this whole building was the hospitium or guest-house, and the room at the end for guests of especial honour; but the legend of the abbot's parlour is more

compendious, and seems to focus the associations of the place.

From below, the whole is a pleasant bit of calm, restful colouring; the old timbers, the patches here and there of brickwork, toned with age and lichen growth, the grey, hoary stones, the ruined tracery; while the sentiment of the place culminates in the broken balustrade and its half-decayed woodwork. All about are stables, out-houses; nothing obtrusively new or in a bristling state of repair, but contributing rather to the general tender tone of slowly passing time with its gently corroding touch.

"Yes, there is a nice bit of colour about the place," says our young man with his head on one side, critically, "and a good many come to paint it. Why, there's a lady now at work upon it, only she hasn't come yet."

And with that our guide admits us to a private view of the lady's picture as it stands in a cartshed with its face to the wall. May the subject be a propitious one, and may we meet the canvas at a future time in a more dignified position—on the line at the Royal Academy, we will say!

And then on the other side of the old building we come to the rushing mill-stream, dashing along under the pleasant shade of noble chestnut-trees, and darting into the dark yawning archway of the old abbey mill. The mill is still running merrily, and the waters rush on with the same roar and swirl, the same mingling of deep shadows and brilliant points of light, as at any time during the ages past. The spirit of antiquity seems to hover in this cool, secluded nook. Even the Saxon monks seem at no great distance from you, and the clerks who came from Glastonbury and founded a school that was famous long before the Conquest, or those who year by year compiled the famous Chronicle of Abingdon.

Was the climate more sultry in those days of old? Were the summers longer, the autumnal frosts less rigorous? Nobody grows grapes about Abingdon now, and yet the monks had a vineyard here, it is pretty evident. For the name still attached to a now populous quarter of the little town, and the Vine, or the Vineyard, is repeated in signs of the taverns of the district. And beyond The Vineyard is an old farmhouse, a grey-stone, gabled building, adjoining which are some still more ancient ruins. But about the history of these ruins we could gather nothing,

except that it was believed there was an underground passage from hence to the abbey—the underground passage makes a great figure in all local traditions of abbeys and castles. But the farmhouse is now deserted and tenantless, and the stable-doors stand wide open, while there are no horses left to steal. Barns are empty, too, and cowsheds. There is not even a hen to cluck at the barn-door, or a goose to raise the alarm of strange intruders. Wherever we poke about we hear only the echo of our own voices, and there is nothing to tell the tale of all this desertion and loneliness except some tattered bills announcing a sale, unreserved, of live and dead stock, and some legal notices nailed to a door which nobody now cares to open. It is a picture of the desolation of to-day, more cruel and complete, perhaps, than any of old times.

As we take ship once more at Abingdon—the elder Pycrofts are to meet us at Dorchester for luncheon, and we have made up our minds, we of the crew, to do or die this day, and reach Streatley, or its twin, Goring, before we finally lay down our sculls—as we are pushing off into the stream, Mr. Pycroft dismisses us with a riddle. It is one he has culled from the black-letter of Dr. Plot, and is older anyhow than Charles the Second's time:

The first letter of our forefadyr, a worker of
wax, an I, and an N,
The colour of an Ass, and what have you
then?

And we all agree that our merest tyros in conundrums could make a better riddle than that, and that if our ancestors could have been pleased with that sort of thing, they must have been vastly inferior in mental calibre to their supposed degenerate descendants.

There was nothing very exciting in our progress down the river, which for the first few miles runs through flat, fertile meadows, with no object more marked than a cow grazing on the bank, or a distant bridge. Claudia insists upon pulling a pair of sculls, and as we have only mademoiselle to pull along, with a long stretch, almost straight, of river before us, we make the boat move along. Our first stopping-place is Clifton Hampden, one of the pleasantest little places we have so far seen—quite unique, indeed, with its little rocky gorge, with church and buildings rising picturesquely out. But we all agree that the view from the road down the gorge, with a bright reach of water coming

into the prospect, and the pretty new bridge, is the cream of the whole. The little glen is so luxuriantly wild, the whole place is overgrown with flowers and creepers; and as we take to the water again, Claudia remembers a verse of Shenstone which seems to reproduce the scene in the indefinite, faded colours of the eighteenth century:

How sweetly smil'd the hill, the vale,
And all the landscape round!
The river gliding down the dale,
The hill with beeches crowned.

The hill with beeches crowned is now coming into prominent distinctness, after being with us more or less, at intervals, all the morning. Measured by map and compasses, our progress has been small since we passed Nuneham Courteney yesterday, for it is just a mile and a half as the crow flies between Clifton Hampden and Nuneham, while we have pulled eight miles at least—of good, liberal measure, as Thames miles generally seem to be. And now the beech-crowned hill looks close at hand, although we have some miles to pull ere we reach Day's Lock, which lies at the foot of the hill which seems to block the further progress of the river. The hill which rises suddenly from the fertile plain, appears to be one and undivided till we approach its flank, when it is seen that it divides into two peaks, the farthest being the famed Sinodun, or, as pronounced, Swindon Hill, whose steep sides are terraced with strong earthworks, the work, perhaps, of some prehistoric people. The Danes have the credit of having raised these defences, in popular estimation; but more likely Sinodun was the hill city of some Celtic tribe, like one of those forts which gave so much trouble to Caesar in the Gallic war. On the opposite side of the river is a series of entrenchments cutting off a considerable area of fertile plain, and extending from the Thames above Day's Lock to the mouth of the Thame below Dorchester; all of which probably formed part of the same system of defence of which Sinodun Hill was the *arx* or citadel.

At the mouth of the Thame we land to explore the village of Dorchester, the little river itself being narrow and well choked with weeds; and presently we come in sight of the low, squat tower and the long roof-ridge of the quasi-cathedral church, the once great centre of the Christian church, among the Saxons of east and west. When we think that this is the mother-church to Lincoln, Lichfield, Win-

chester, and a host of minor sees, we cannot help wonder at the changes that time has wrought. For Dorchester, if not altogether the quietest village in the kingdom, cannot be far from the front rank in that respect, although its two neat little inns, and a butcher's shop with joints actually in evidence on the butcher's hooks, seem to indicate a certain amount of civilisation. Possibly it was market-day that gave rise to the display of animal food, but the Pycrofts, who had arrived an hour or two before us, had certainly contrived to secure some mutton-chops, upon which we made a satisfactory luncheon.

The church is the one great feature of the place, its massive bulk dwarfing the little village street. A great, gaunt building that corresponds with what one would think is the Saxon ideal of a church, a huge barn, massive and weather-proof, but wanting every grace of architectural outline and detail. All this in outward aspect only, for within, the original bare shell has been encrusted with much meritorious work by Gilbert Scott and subsequent restorers. Broken columns, morsels of richly-carved capitals, fragments of ruined shrines, which have been brought to light of late years, and are piled up in different parts of the church, bear witness to the former richness of the interior of which a few centuries of neglect and iconoclasm made havoc. The floor, too, is paved with ancient monuments, with the matrices of fine brasses, the metal of which has long since disappeared; but there are also sundry antique effigies in tolerable preservation. A crusader whose contorted legs are probably due to the zeal of the local sculptor outrunning his anatomical studies—a fine figure of a knight of the Black Prince period—a bishop of the rigid early period, whose robes suggest the oriental origin of so many of our early churchmen, in days when east and west were really closer together than now, in spite of modern steam and telegraph, and when the hermit of the desert and the monk of the west felt a certain kinship and sympathy. Then in the chancel is to be seen the famous Jesse window, the tracery of the lights all issuing as a tree from the recumbent forms of the founder of the house of David, with kings and prophets of Israel sculptured among the branches.

But we have still the best of the day's journey before us, and cannot afford time

to linger any longer at Dorchester, although the place is well worth a little exploration; and so we take boat again, and descend pleasantly enough, aided by a rather sharp stream, till the long handsome bridge of Shillingford comes in sight, and, just beyond, The Swan appears snugly nestled on the hillside, where the range of down-like hills that issues in the massive bulwark of Sinodun, now gently dies away into the plain. A few miles lower down, after passing Benson Lock, we come to a mill, prettily situated, with a ferry close by, and here in the nook of the bank where we tie up, we discover—Claudia and I, for mademoiselle has fallen asleep after her luncheon, and still remains in blissful repose as we scramble up the bank—a pleasant seat, an oaken settle, ancient and weather-worn—evidently placed for the benefit of those who have to wait for the ferryman; while attached is a bell of curious antique shape, just such a bell, with its grip at the top for the hand, as might have been borne in procession centuries ago, when there was any cursing to be done with “bell, book, and candle.” And although there is nothing to be seen of the ferryman and his boat, yet there is the feeling that if the bell were rung loud enough we should see the ferry-boat creeping round just in the eddy of the mill-stream. Claudia, indeed, who possesses a vivid youthful imagination, suggests that the bell is placed there just as the horn is hung at the gate of the enchanted castle, and that to ring that bell might involve us in some curious adventure.

But adventures are for the adventurous, and neither of us feels in Quixotic mood to-day. Nor am I at all anxious to summon any witnesses to our tête-à-tête by the riverside. The heat of the day is over, and a pleasant breeze ripples the river, which glides smoothly by, “giving a gentle kiss to every sedge,” and the stillness has tempted forth a little brood of dabchicks, four or five little morsels of down, with the parent bird at the head of them, which dive and reappear, and dart about after flies, quite indifferent to our presence. Claudia has picked up an ox-eyed daisy, and is pulling it to pieces, flinging the petals one by one into the stream.

“Well,” I said, when the petals were all gone, “it is ‘loves me,’ of course.”

“Hush!” said Claudia. “There is a word that is sure to arouse mademoiselle.”

Mademoiselle, however, was still sleeping

very comfortably, embowered in rushes, so that there was no reason why the forbidden subject should be eschewed. Claudia half acknowledged that she was wondering whether somebody loved her, but not anybody in particular. She had only a vague kind of curiosity on the subject. And then I suggested, as in duty bound, how happy Charlwood would be could he think that he had been the subject of such a flattering sortilege.

“Let Charlwood speak for himself,” said Claudia proudly.

To which I rejoined that probably we should see Charlwood to-night, and that no doubt he would speak for himself.

“And then,” I said savagely, “when I had handed over the boat and its crew to the charge of its legitimate captain, I should retire to distant realms and misogynistic retirement.”

“But why?” asked Claudia, in innocent wonder; “since Charlwood is your great friend, why should you give us up when he comes?”

“Only having held the chief place for all these pleasant days, how could I bear to see anybody else holding it?”

“Perhaps he won’t come, after all,” said Claudia with girlish insouciance. “Very likely he won’t. He is too much taken up with Rebecca, perhaps. Do you know Rebecca?” turning upon me with a sudden glow of interest.

I described the dark maiden’s charms, her speaking eyes, her lovely hair, her beautiful voice.

“She must be very charming,” said Claudia softly. “Perhaps, when you leave us, you will take Charlwood’s place by her side?”

Well, the notion had not occurred to me before, but, once suggested, it seemed a very promising one. If Rebecca would only smile upon me, halcyon days might come again. But Claudia took my careless words for earnest. She looked steadfastly away from me and up the river, but her eyes were suffused, her lip trembled. The temptation to seize the little brown hand that rested on the seat was too great to be resisted.

“Claudia, whether as captain or as crew, I should like always to sail with you.”

“Is that poetry?” asked Claudia, laughing nervously, while still a film of sorrow veiled her eyes. And she tried to withdraw her hand, but not impatiently.

“Claudia!” cried a voice from the river.

Mademoiselle had awoke, and was looking out anxiously in our direction. "Claudia, my child, how long have you been there?"

"Not very long," replied Claudia in a voice as unconcerned as she could make it.

"I must have shut my eyes for a little moment, I suppose. Well, and what are we stopping here for? It is very triste among these rushes."

"We are coming directly, ma'amselle," cried Claudia, and then she stooped and patted the quaint old bell that had wisely held its tongue all the time. "Good-bye, bell," she whispered; "you have brought us a little adventure after all."

As we pushed off into the main stream, Wallingford came in sight with its long, many-arched bridge, a bridge that spreads itself over land and water indiscriminately. And at Wallingford we met the elder Pyecrofts, who had been waiting for us some time, and had driven the distance from Dorchester in much quicker time than we had done it by water.

There is little at Wallingford to show for its former importance as a royal residence and stronghold. The town itself seems dull and lifeless beyond most country towns, without any picturesque features. Of the royal castle there only remain the earthworks of the keep, which are separated from the river by some low-lying meadows. This keep formed one corner of a strong enceinte that enclosed the town. Probably the river, or a channel of it, once ran directly under the castle-walls, and the low-lying meadows may have once formed the island where that King Stephen and Henry Plantagenet met, and concluded the treaty which settled the succession of the English crown. At a later date the castle belonged to the Black Prince, and here died his widow, the fair Joan of Kent, the much-loved and much-married Joan, whose ransom from the rebels of Kent, when in years she was quite an old woman, was a kiss graciously bestowed on the leader of the force. And Joan being a distinct human, and what is better, feminine, figure in the barren annals of the past, gives a certain interest to these grassy mounds.

Mr. Pyecroft, who has looked up the local history, tells us how Joan of Kent, making her last testament, on her death-bed in Wallingford Castle, gave to her son, King Richard the Second, her new bed of red velvet, embroidered with ostrich-feathers of silver, and leopards' heads of

gold, with boughs and leaves proceeding from their mouths—probably the very bed from which the testament was penned; and we may think of joyous Joan as drawing her last breath in her damp, rheumatic old castle with all this tawdry grandeur about her; while to Thomas, Earl of Kent, and John Holand, her elder sons, she leaves each a bed of red camak—whatever that may be. As for the old tradition of the former existence of fourteen pariah churches within the town, this probably owes its origin to some confusion between the boundary of the honour of Wallingford and of the town itself. Certainly, as far as Leland's evidence goes, who visited the town A.D. 1542, although he mentions the tradition, he found at that time only "three poore parochie churches" within its limits. So that Tom Fairfax and his Puritans, who stormed and took the town at a later date, must be absolved of any wholesale destruction of churches.

Perhaps Wallingford would be more interesting if you could get a bird's-eye view of it from some neighbouring height, and trace its old earthworks and the line where its walls once stood; but all is flat as a table-cloth about there. Nor is the river very interesting, for some distance below, being rather a Dutch canal-like stream. And on the right bank of the river there rises a big, many-windowed brick building, that gives rise to the following colloquy, the speakers being the man in the boat, and an honest-looking countryman who is walking the towpath with his sweet heart:

"Can you tell me what that big building is—the red-brick one over yonder?"

"Whaat, that big building over theer?"

"Yes, exactly."

"Whaat, that big building, a' red-break?"

"The very place."

"And yow waant to know whaat 'tis."

"That's just what I ask you."

"Why," with a burst of suppressed chuckles, as if the joke were too rich almost for utterance, "thaat building be the 'sylumn."

But as the river approaches Moulsoford, the scene becomes more inviting. The river is approaching a chain of hills, that seem to dispute its path. Our Thames has passed through the first part of its course—the smooth and uneventful part. Hitherto the river has skirted the hills it has met, and gone out of its way to avoid them, but now it seems to make its course

in spite of them; entering their narrow defiles with a strong faith in its eventual destiny. Rushes and stumpy willows, too, give place to fine and well-grown timber, and with a background of these noble trees stands the little riverside inn, The Beetle and Wedge, with the ferry-boat moored in front of it, and a group of young fellows, mostly artists, enjoying their pipes in the pleasant evening air. But more surprising it is to find ourselves hailed from the shore. The Pyecrofts have stopped here on their drive. They are not given to stopping at roadside or riverside inns on their way, so that this proceeding of theirs is the more astonishing. But Mrs. Pyecroft makes signals that she particularly wants me to come ashore, and she carries me off as soon as I land.

"I have heard of them," cried Mrs. Pyecroft excitedly; "Charlwood has been here this very day; the whole party of them have been here all this day fishing, and they have only just gone back to their quarters, somewhere near to Basildon. We must find them at once."

Mrs. Pyecroft's excitement infected me to a certain extent, and put it in my mind to say what I should otherwise have held over for a time. Why should they—her parents—devote poor Claudia to one who did not care for her to begin with, and was never likely to make her happy?

"Give her to me, Mrs. Pyecroft," I urged; "I have longed for her from the first moment I saw her portrait. She will be happy with me."

"I wish I could," cried Mrs. Pyecroft, wringing her hands nervously. "I would rather trust the child with you than with Charlwood, but—oh, I cannot sacrifice her father! There, I cannot say any more, but you must know that what you ask is impossible."

But I could not be brought to see the impossibility of the matter. There could be no valid reason, apart from the sentimental consideration of keeping the estate in the family name, which certainly ought not to outweigh the happiness of a number of human creatures; apart from this, what could there be to render such an ill-starred union necessary?

"Oh," cried Mrs. Pyecroft, laying her hand appealingly on my arm, "can we trust you? I think we can; and it will be a great relief to me, for all the burden is upon my shoulders."

Surely Mrs. Pyecroft could trust me, since it was my great ambition to become

a member of her family. Claudia's mother might rely upon all that my skill could do to help her.

"Then I will tell you our story," said Mrs. Pyecroft, "beginning with my uncle Charlwood, who made a large fortune in Bristol and left all his money to my eldest child—for Charlwood's father had offended him just before his death. Now, at that time, we had a son, who was too much like Charlwood, poor boy! good-hearted, but extravagant and dissipated. He knew that this fortune of my uncle's was coming to him, and he was beyond our control. From bad, my poor boy went to worse, and in one mad hour he forged the name of a friend to bills for a large amount. The bills were coming due; my poor boy saw his name dishonoured, himself spending his best years in prison. He came to me, and told me everything. And I made his father save him. But this he could only do by risking his own good name. A large part of Uncle Charlwood's trust was invested in house-property; this was readily disposed of, the other trustee signing his name unsuspectingly to the transfer. In a few months my son would come of age, and could acquit his father of all responsibility. Before those months had elapsed, my poor, unfortunate son was dead. Never has poor Ernest been able to make up the deficiency; in his efforts, he has, I fear, still further embarrassed himself. Still, the money is Claudia's, that is, if she lives to twenty-one. And there would be no real danger, but for the possibility of interfering friends. I am told that if the estate were thrown into Chancery, my poor husband and the other trustee, Mr. Boothby, might be made to refund, at once, all that money, and that poor Ernest might be sent to prison till it is paid. And there is one unfortunate circumstance. Mr. Thomas has purchased the house-property, and, although his title is quite good, I am told he is always poking about and asking questions. Now, if ever by evil chance he and Mr. Boothby should come together——"

I groaned out aloud:

"Why, my dear Mrs. Pyecroft, the evil you dread has actually come to pass. Mr. Boothby and old Thomas are hand and glove together at this moment."

"Then my poor husband, my wretched Ernest, is undone!" cried Mrs. Pyecroft wildly. "Oh, Mr. Penrice, save him—save him for me and his child, and you shall have Claudia—you shall have anything—only save him!"

AFTER LONG YEARS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE weeks that elapsed between the despatch of the letter in which Stephen Ellerton made his formal demand to Colonel Hamilton for his daughter's hand, and the arrival of the latter's reply, were the most trying the young man had as yet experienced. Between his aunt and himself there had fallen upon the subject which was uppermost in his thoughts a dead silence; and, do what he would, he could not prevent his fears getting the better of his hopes, when he recalled their conversation. It was not as though, as he put it to himself in the homely Saxon which came most readily to his lips, he had been "worth having." There was so little, if anything, to be urged for him as a suitor, that it was hard to have anything positive against him. The most hopeful element was contained in the confidence Mary herself seemed to feel in her father's indulgence, and, even when he took heart at this, Steenie could not but reflect that she knew less than he did, and that he had himself placed no less reliance upon his aunt.

He ran up to town; though he would have avoided it if he could, eager as he was to see Mary herself, until he felt a greater certainty of his ground. But having been asked, he could not refuse to go, and very kind and friendly everybody at The Cedars was to him. There seemed to be a little astonishment; not at Mary's precipitancy, for precipitate she could scarcely be said to have been, but at the fact that she should have allowed herself to be, as it were, taken by storm.

"I was taken aback when I heard of it, I must say," Mrs. Lindsay observed, laughing. "But I don't know why I should have been. Mary is never long in making up her mind about anything or anybody."

Mary had, it appeared to Steenie, very much her own way with all of them. She was brighter and quicker, and had more ideas of her own, than the rest of the young ones. She had "character," as the phrase goes, and a will of her own to boot, and she had had things pretty well her own way always. Still they had not spoiled her; she had had to give and take; and, it must be added, her way was not, as a rule, a wicked way. Her impulses were good, if they were strong, and there was no guile in her.

She could not run down to West Saxford to see Miss Dunscombe, as she had made

Steenie run up to town to see her cousins, for the very good reason that she was not asked.

"Besides, my dear, we don't know yet what your father will say," Mrs. Lindsay mildly reminded her.

"What can he say?" she retorted. "He told me his one wish was to see me happy, and he spoke of my marrying. He could not expect to keep me to himself, he said. And papa does not think money is everything, any more than you do. He is sure to be satisfied."

"One can never be sure of anything in this world," the older woman replied gravely; but she did not expect anything worse than a conditional acceptance. To her, as well as to Mary, therefore, the Colonel's letter, when it did arrive, conveyed a shock; for in it he begged his daughter quietly but earnestly to put the thought of Stephen Ellerton on one side.

"I have nothing," he wrote, "to urge against him personally; I do not know him, and the letter he has done me the honour to write is gentlemanly and straightforward; but I have reasons for objecting strongly to a connection between the families, and you will take my word for it that these reasons are good and sufficient. Heaven knows I would not thwart you for any caprice of my own; but I am satisfied that no happiness would accrue to either party from such a marriage."

"What does he mean, Aunt Emma? What can be the matter with the family, and what can he have known of them?" Mary Hamilton asked with a pale, set face, as she sat facing her kinswoman; the letter, which the latter had just returned to her, lying in her lap.

To her the kindly woman who had been a second mother to her was always "aunt."

"My dear, how can I say? Insanity, perhaps. There were people, you know, who thought that the tragedy at West Saxford was not murder at all, but suicide. It is possible your father may be one of them."

"You did not think so, and Uncle Hugh said the other night it was as plain a case of murder as could be."

"I only said, dear, there were those who did think so. How can I tell what your father means? There is only one thing, Mary, I think, we may be sure of—his reasons are good and sufficient."

"I have no doubt he thinks them so," Mary said. "But I would rather he had given them. What has he written to

Steenie, I wonder; and what will he do? Come and tell me he is not to be allowed to have me, or—come and beg me to run away with him?”

She tried to laugh, but failed miserably; and the tears, in spite of her, rose into her eyes.

“I was so happy,” she said, “and I felt so sure. It seems scarcely fair to ask us to give each other up, without saying why.”

“There are things, dear child, which it is kinder to leave unsaid,” Mrs. Lindsay suggested gently.

“Your mind keeps running on the one thing, Aunt Emma,” Mary replied with some impatience. “And you will never make me believe there is any more tendency to that in Steenie and his people than there is in me and mine.”

The evening brought a distracted little letter from Steenie. He had had his dismissal in very laconic terms, and the next day he took a holiday and came up to The Cedars. He had made up his mind there should be no mystery or misunderstanding between him and Mary—that if they were to be kept apart, it should not be in any degree by their own instrumentality.

“Your father and my aunt were engaged to each other,” he told her to her great astonishment, “and she considers your father treated her badly, in what way I cannot make out; but from the first she seemed sure there would be an objection.”

“I don’t believe papa ever behaved badly to anybody, least of all to a woman,” the girl exclaimed warmly. “Your aunt must be labouring under a delusion.”

Her own words brought back to her memory Mrs. Lindsay’s suggestion of the day before.

“There is no other reason?” she queried. “Oh, Steenie, be candid with me! It will be better for us both. There is no other reason whatever—there is nothing else associated in papa’s mind with your family?”

“On my word of honour, to the best of my belief, nothing,” he answered readily; “what should there be?”

For all her answer, she put her hand in his.

“I take your word for it,” she said; “and that being all there is to come between us, I will do as you wish. I will wait for my father’s consent until I see him. I cannot ask you to come and see me, and I must not write to you, but I shall wait for you just the same, until I hear you. On your part, have grown tired

of waiting. There is no fear of me; I have the patience and the obstinacy of a mule!”

Miss Dunscombe took outwardly with great calmness the announcement of the decision at which her nephew and the girl to whom he had so warmly attached himself, had arrived. She had “said her say,” and she was not a woman to waste words; but she did feel, and feel bitterly, that Steenie had made her will and wish of no account in the matter. She would have resented it still more, had she not been so sure of the impotence of the defiance he was proclaiming. It was not in her nature to trample upon a fallen enemy, and already in her mind’s eye she saw him in the dust, for of Colonel Hamilton’s line of conduct who could entertain a doubt?

As far as she could, therefore, she studiously ignored the difference which had taken place in their relations with each other. Still, do what she would, nothing could bridge over the gulf which lay between them. What possible intercourse, worthy of the name, can remain to people when the subject which lies nearest to the heart of one of them is forbidden ground to the other? The increased isolation in which he found himself had the effect which might have been anticipated on the young man. He went out more and stayed out longer, from which it is not to be inferred that he fell into evil courses, that he drank, gambled, or otherwise disgraced himself, for he did nothing of the kind. He simply became more and more independent of his aunt, and estranged from her, and she, in spite of herself, from him. People noticed it, of course—as they notice everything, particularly that which is not to their neighbour’s credit—and invented various explanations of it, none of which touched the truth. That which took the taste of West Saxford most decidedly had for its basis Nellie Bevan’s marriage. Young Ellerton, they said, had put a good face upon it at the time, but it had unsettled him. Nor was the public mind altogether satisfied, as time went on, as to Nellie herself. The girl had grown grave since her return home in her new character, and even her husband struck his old associates as being, as some of them expressed it, “down in the mouth.” Mr. Bevan’s health was understood to continue unsatisfactory, and the young couple’s surroundings were possibly, on that account, less cheerful than they should have been.

Steenie did not see much of them.

Mr. Bevan, though he still came to the office, did not stay late, and he very rarely expressed a wish to see the young man at his own house. Indeed, that avoidance of himself which the latter imagined he had observed some time since, had in no wise diminished; but Steenie was the less aggrieved by it, as he saw indications of a growing disposition to shun the society of others, no less than of himself, on the part of the old lawyer. His ill-health seemed to have made him morose and moody, and it would appear that even Nellie was powerless to counteract the effect of it.

Time seems proverbially leaden-footed to those who wait; but even to them, after a certain space, it ceases to drag as heavily as at first, and the last nine months or so of Steenie's probation were apparently swifter in their flight than the first. Mary Hamilton had held it no part of her duty to keep him in utter ignorance of her well-being and whereabouts. One can send a paper now and again, even if one may not meet or write, and of these innocent, if prosaic, tokens of remembrance there had been a constant interchange from the first. I am not one of those who think that love, in the hearts of most of us, will live without any sustenance whatever, but I am satisfied that it can be kept not merely alive, but thriving, upon the most pitiful fragments.

It was in this way that things went on until within three months, or thereabouts, of Colonel Hamilton's return, when Miss Dunscombe suddenly called her nephew's attention to herself by falling ill. She was a great gardener, and never at any time over-careful of herself, and she contrived, by dint of exposing herself with her usual recklessness to the March winds, to take cold, a circumstance to which, after her accustomed fashion, she attached very little importance. It resulted, however, for once, in a sharp attack of congestion of the lungs, and for a few days there was, in the professional phrase, grave cause for anxiety.

And Steenie was anxious—*anxious* and remorseful both. She had been devoted to him all her life, and he had not taken her into his confidence, as she had deserved to be taken. He had kept her in the dark on both occasions when the question had been of his future—first to suit the convenience of one girl, then that of another—and now he was going his own way,

quite irrespective of her. He felt guilty and miserable enough during those hours in which her life hung, as it were, in the balance. But scarcely to save it could he now have broken faith with the girl who had stood by him so patiently and pluckily. It was sweet to the poor, hungry soul, starving in silence for more love than it would ever get down here, to see that he cared so much, and perhaps it helped her, more than the doctors thought, to get well; but it made it harder to settle down into the old ways—ways in which Steenie took nowadays so small a share—afterwards. She grew restless and irritable in her convalescence, and when it was suggested that she should go away for a time for change of air and scene, she fell into the idea with a readiness which surprised him. He was still more surprised when she told him suddenly one day that she had consented to let the house for the summer.

"Mrs. Stracey has a friend for whom it would be the very thing—a City man with a delicate wife, who is ordered change and quiet, anywhere but at the sea, and she has written to him to come and see it," Miss Dunscombe informed her nephew. "They are quiet people, without children, and would take care of it. I told her you would retain your bedroom, and, for the rest, you will find a bachelor life for a time no trial."

The young man could scarcely believe his ears. She had, indeed, grasped, more completely than he had supposed possible, his complete independence of her, or she would never have suggested turning him adrift like this.

"It will save trouble in many ways," she vouchsafed to add. "I shall send Wilson home on board-wages, and take Milly with me. Jim they will be glad of in the garden, but they will bring their own servants, and I shall have no worry as to how things are going on in my absence."

"And may I ask for how long you propose making this arrangement?" Steenie asked stiffly.

"For three months certain—for longer if they wish it," she replied coolly.

The next day, the gentleman in question—a London stockbroker, of the name of Burroughes—came down and saw the house, and on the 1st of May Miss Dunscombe gave him possession, and took her own departure for the seaside.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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GERALD.

BY KLEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXXII. AT THE FIELDS.

DUST everywhere, and a hot, brooding, lurid atmosphere, which makes strangers to Kimberley, in spite of themselves, think of other and older "cities of the plain." The town lies irregularly about a low hill; it is surrounded by the great barren veldt, which stretches away for miles to the mountains, and is covered with rough scrub-grass, or sometimes it is all sand and dead brown stalks. The nearest green place, where trees and gardens are to be found, is Barkly, by the Vaal river, twenty-four miles away. Here, where the first diamonds were found, the Fields people go to get rid of their fevers, or at least to refresh themselves after enduring their own climate a little too long.

There may have been changes and improvements since that time; but when Gerald and Theo arrived at Kimberley the town was built of corrugated iron, with mud huts and canvas tents here and there; the streets, or roadways rather, were a wilderness of dust and holes; the place, in fact, was a mere settlement round the great mine, which was still worked by private claim-holders. Companies had hardly begun to be formed. Each man worked for himself, was lucky, sold his diamonds to the Jew dealers, lived wildly and extravagantly till the money was all gone; or was unlucky, worked on in despair till he could afford to work no longer, and ended perhaps in starvation or suicide, while, by no means rarely, the diamonds which would have saved his life and made his fortune were carried off from the mine by his Kafir labourers, hidden in their mouths, or even in a slit in their skins.

his diamonds home to his wife in his waist-coat-pocket, and she looked them carefully over, and put the white ones into a little bottle of acid on a shelf, for fear they should crack in cutting. Here at Kimberley people thought of diamonds, talked of diamonds, searched for diamonds from early in the morning till late at night. Thousands of Kafirs, possessing no clothes but an old scarlet jacket, which they generally did not wear, spent their days digging out soil in the mine, which was sent up in buckets to be pulverised, and washed, and sifted, and sorted; this last part of the work was always done by the owner himself.

All this interested Theo extremely when she first came to the Fields. She was in a mood to like everything, and everything amused her. She found things to admire, things that she said were beautiful, while Gerald laughed again at her idealising power. She saw new effects of colour, where he refused to see anything but dusty grey and brown—the purple-blue of the heaps of soil about the mine; the dark staging and machinery standing up against a faint yellow sky shading into blue; the red road running along into the town; the yellow-green of the grass; the yellow huts of a Kafir location, with black figures moving about in red coats, blue coats, red caps; sometimes a wild Kafir in an orange blanket, with beads round his neck. She liked to see the ox-waggons, gaily painted, outspanned in the great open square of the town, the long-horned oxen meekly waiting, the dark faces of many nations passing by, the coolies selling fruit, the Malays in their gaudy dresses driving or sauntering along. There was a romance about it all for Theo, in spite of the dust, the bad food, the enormous dearness of everything, the Jew dealers and the diamonds; but just

She had declared to Gerald that their own house was a great deal nicer than she expected.

"What did you expect, then?" he said rather dolefully.

"Oh, an iron thing," said Theo. "A shed, with two rooms. How many rooms has this? Four, and a kitchen, and a tent. No stairs! How nice! A garden actually, with trees in it. And it is all really our own!"

"I bought it and the furniture, as it stands," said Gerald. "If you had not come I should have sold it again; or, perhaps, have found some fellows to live with me."

He looked at her with laughing eyes, as she stood in the middle of the drawing-room. His wife—his house—it was all like a dream; and there was Combe in the background, casting anxious looks round her; she, too, though she would not have confessed it, was agreeably surprised at the house, which, at least, looked clean.

Poor little house! Theo often thinks of it now, and never without a strange ache at her heart, and a disposition to tears. If happiness was short-lived there, it was very real while it lasted.

Outside, the house was corrugated iron, with canvas stretched over the roof to keep the heat away. All along the front, a reed-fence divided it and its little compound from the road. There was a deep porch before the door, with a green creeper climbing over it; through this one went straight into what they called the drawing-room, which was the whole front of the house, except a little room on the left, called the study. This opened out of the drawing-room by a corner door, and so did the dining-room, a long little room behind; through it again was a bedroom, a sort of lean-to, with a sloping roof, looking out at the back on a row of blue gum-trees which divided them from their next-door neighbours. Then there was the kitchen, a tiny hole which opened out of the other end of the dining-room, and here was the only fireplace, except a stove in the corner of the dining-room. As there was no other room of any sort, Combe had to sleep in a tent outside in the compound; this frightened her a good deal at first, but she was not really a coward at heart, and was soon quite proud of her tent, which she made into a smart little abode.

She was thankful to have reached some sort of home at last, and not displeased to have full swing for all her talents, which

were many. She went out marketing, she cooked, she swept and dusted; she set herself to upholsterer's work, and made covers for the chairs and sofa out of some chintz that Mrs. Forester had advised her to bring from Cape Town. The canvas walls, the canvas ceilings, looked bare and ugly enough, but they had bought some photographs in Cape Town, and Gerald hung them up, with one or two little favourite pictures that Theo had brought with her. Then he and she had a few books, and these made the rooms look homelike, and, after all, it was home.

Gerald had a little office in another street, where his building company was supposed to give estimates, receive tenders, and do all its business, which on most days was no business at all. His chief occupation, therefore, was writing letters to the promoters of the concern in England, warning them how very poor its prospects were. If his pay was no more certain than the profits, this was, indeed, a bad look-out for him; but before throwing it over altogether, he wished to give some other man time to come out and take his place. His friend the banker, who had taken a fancy to him, would give him a temporary clerkship at any time. This was all very well, and might keep off starvation, but it did not prevent Gerald from feeling very uneasy.

He had no capital at all; Theo had her few thousand pounds; there had been no settlements—an additional cause of grief and rage to Captain North and Mr. Goodall. Thus they could do what they liked with their money as long as it lasted; and when Gerald looked about him at Kimberley, and saw how men doubled their fortunes there, all his thoughts began to turn one way. The prudent old banker strongly advised him against having anything to do with diamonds, holding up many instances of ruined men. Still Gerald was attracted. He had a certain turn for speculation, and though no venture of his had ever succeeded, yet there seemed to be no reason why he should be unlucky always.

He said nothing of this to Theo; at this time they found money talk perfectly uninteresting. It was only Combe who complained to her of the terrible price of everything, on which Theo laughed, and said that everything was so bad, it ought to go a great deal farther. They were not sure of much more than three hundred a year. Gerald had provided for Ada, and

had spent almost his last money in buying the house, and horses, and fetching his wife from Cape Town. Theo was not at all anxious, arguing that she would want no evening dresses, and failing to realise, at first, that their income was about equal to a hundred and fifty in England.

On one of the first days, she had waked up from a peaceful afternoon sleep, and was looking out of the window, expecting Gerald, when she saw Mrs. Lee coming up to the door. She hardly knew her; the little woman was so very much changed in appearance. All her misery had been left behind on board ship; she was very smartly dressed, very lively in her manners; she came laughing into the room, and insisted on kissing Theo, who bent her head with a shade of reluctance.

"Poor little thing!" she reproached herself; "why am I so horrid! It is very nice of her to want to kiss me."

And she immediately began with extreme kindness to ask after Mr. Lee and the baby.

"Oh, we're all flourishing, thank you," said Mrs. Lee. "As to you—dear me, how queer it is to call you Mrs. Fane!—you don't look as if you liked it much. You're a lot paler than you were on board. Ah, I've heard more than one say that it don't answer, coming out to them. It's more than they ought to expect. Is that it now? Or is it the journey that's been too much for you?"

Theo looked at her in a sort of dreamy surprise. There came vaguely into her mind at that moment a piece of advice that Mrs. Forester had given her, when they were talking about people and life at the Fields. This advice was: "Give yourself airs." It had amused Theo rather at the time, for she had sometimes found that her character at home was that of a young woman whose airs were insupportable; but it was true that since her engagement to Gerald she had changed very much in this respect. The old airs, no doubt, were somewhere not far off; but she felt gentle and charitable towards everybody, and not at all inclined to show them. She and Gerald had talked a little on the journey about these things, and had agreed that they would be very friendly with their neighbours, though not absolutely intimate with them. Theo had, of course, thought of Mrs. Lee, the only one she knew, and was quite prepared to be kind to the little woman, but then she had pictured her unhappy, and appealing to her kindness.

It must be confessed that this flush of prosperity, which made the poor little thing ten times more vulgar than she had been on board ship, had a chilling effect on her friend. Theo began to perceive that Mrs. Forester's advice was based on good sense, and not on prejudice or worldliness, as she had imagined at the moment. She ignored all Mrs. Lee's questions, and answered, smiling:

"I am very well, thank you. Of course, the climate tries one rather."

"I should think it did," said Mrs. Lee. "You've got to be careful about fever, everyone says, and this is just the time of year for it. So don't you go doing wild things—stopping out late, or going out too much in the sun. I expect you're one of those people who don't half take care of themselves."

"It would be very horrid to have the fever," said Theo.

She sat there, slender and pale, and dressed in grey, in the corner of her sofa, while Mrs. Lee, bolt upright and in very bright colours, went on chattering. Her black eyes went roving round the room; sometimes they were fixed on Theo, with a curious scrutiny of everything she had on. She talked about the fever for some time; then about the people she already knew at Kimberley—they were very jolly, she said; about the stores, and the shocking dearth of everything; about houses and furniture, inviting Theo in rather triumphant tones to come and see her house; then about dress, a subject on which she was quite at home; and now she began to gaze rather anxiously at Theo's grey gown.

"There's one thing we can do here at Kimberley," she said: "we can dress. I tell you, some of the ladies here are as smart as if they'd come out of a London fashion-book. I'm awfully glad, after all, that I brought some good dresses with me. You know, on board, I was ever so sorry. But I find people here are very particular. They take notice of you according as you're dressed. It doesn't do to be a scrub, just as if you were travelling among savages. You came out here to make your fortune, and you must look as if you were making it. You don't mind my saying so, do you, Mrs. Fane? Because, you see, I've been here longer than you have, and so, of course, I've learnt the ways."

"Yes," said Theo. She looked very quiet, very indifferent, lifting her eyes towards her visitor with a sort of idle sweetness.

Mrs. Lee was not at all conscious of the feelings she was exciting; but Gerald, who came up to the porch at that moment, and caught sight of Theo's profile, pale against the shadows, thought that it was a very long time since he had seen her look so cold and scornful.

"She has got a visitor she doesn't like," he thought. "Who is it, I wonder! What a bore!"

He was rather uncomfortable in his mind as he turned away, and went in at the study window. He did not like the people himself, but he got on pretty well with the men, and was nervously anxious that his wife should be popular among the women.

"She needn't show in her face that she despises them, poor wretches!" he thought. "They will never forgive her, and we shall suffer for it in the end. It is partly Mrs. Forester's fault."

"Then you are happier than you expected to be!" said Theo gently, dropping the subject of dress.

"Oh yes, I'm happy enough," said Mrs. Lee. "It's a beastly place, of course, but there's a lot going on. And I always did like, you know, to be in a place where there were more men than women; you get made such a jolly fuss with. And I've had several diamonds given me already; and George likes his partner, and they are having very good luck to begin with. Oh yes, I'm not sorry that we made up our minds to come."

There was only a thin partition between the drawing-room and the study; the door, too, did not shut particularly well; therefore Gerald had the advantage of hearing these last remarks. He thought he had better go in, and relieve Theo; it was evident that this lady would rather be entertained by him than by her; besides, the mention of George's luck interested him rather.

So he went quietly into the room, and Theo introduced him to Mrs. Lee, who jumped up, and shook hands enthusiastically. He certainly would not have known her again, though she well remembered her glimpse of him at Cape Town. He talked to her, and she was quite contented to chatter to him, while Theo listened, happier now that he had come in; since Mrs. Lee's arrival, she had for the first time felt a little despair about Kimberley.

They talked chiefly about diamonds, a subject which did not at this time interest her very much; she found herself dream-

ing as she sat there in her corner, and gazed out through the dark shadow of the porch into the dusty sunshine.

Mrs. Lee's black fringe had now become curly; it bobbed over her sparkling eyes as she talked with great animation to Gerald, telling him the whole history of her husband's speculation. A distant cousin, whom he had never seen, had been working out here alone for a year or two, and had written to George that he had better come out, and buy half his claim. George had never done any good in England, as his wife candidly stated. He wanted at first to leave her and the child behind, but she would not hear of that. On board ship she had certainly repented, but now she was glad she had come; George and his partner had found so many diamonds, worth so many hundred pounds; of course the expenses were great, but the profits were evidently going to be splendid. Mrs. Lee pulled out her purse, and shook out several rough diamonds on to the table.

"Rather valuable property to carry about like that," said Gerald, as he took them in his hand, his brown face looking grave and interested.

"Bless you, we think nothing of them here!" said Mrs. Lee.

She looked from one to the other for a minute in silence, while Gerald examined the little stones.

"You're not a judge of them yet, Mr. Fane," she said, "but you soon would be. I'm quite sharp about the different kinds already. Well, now, you won't be angry, either of you, if I say something?"

Gerald looked up for an instant and smiled; then his eyes went back to the diamonds.

"I don't think your wife will be offended," said Mrs. Lee; "I know her better than you. Well, now, society here is very curious about you two. They have often had young men of your sort, of course, who have run through their money at home—I beg your pardon, I didn't say you had—but Mrs. Fane is rather new, and they don't know what to make of her. And they can't understand why on earth you should have brought her out here, if it wasn't to make a fortune for her. As to that company, you know—I can tell you they shake their heads over that."

Gerald bent his head a little lower over the diamonds; he did not know what to say, and was conscious of the scorn in Theo's face, of a faint angry flush that

might have shown Mrs. Lee she did not quite understand her.

"It is very kind of 'society' to be curious about us," she said, with the faintest possible emphasis on "society"; "but we are not at all interesting; there is no mystery about us, and I hope it won't trouble itself any more. It is possible, I suppose, to live at Kimberley without wanting diamonds!"

Mrs. Lee was quite quick enough to feel her friend's indignation, and she coloured scarlet.

"Well, now, you must forgive me," she said. "Of course, none of us would be your equals in England, but it's a different thing out here, you know; we're all very much on a level."

"I did not mean that," said Theo, still coldly and haughtily. "I have no doubt the people here are very good people, but I don't see why our affairs should interest them."

"They are most thoroughly kind people," said Gerald.

"That they are, and so you'll find them if you are in any trouble. I could name two or three, Mrs. Fane, who will be as kind to you as you were to me on board ship."

Theo smiled a little at this. There was something frank and affectionate about the little woman, in spite of her vulgarity, which made it impossible to be very angry with her.

"I hope I shall not interest them by being in any trouble," she said.

When Mrs. Lee was gone, Gerald came back from the gate, and found his wife walking restlessly up and down the room.

"Do you suppose we shall have all this impertinence over and over again?" she said. "But you don't mind it, evidently. You rather like to be pitied, and wondered about, and interfered with."

"No, I don't," said Gerald, flinging himself on the sofa. "Look here, though. I told you what it would be, and we agreed we would be friendly with them all—don't you remember? And they are not ill-natured, Theo—just the other way. You had much better let them like you. Of course they will, if you'll let them. There is sense in what they say. Every day I see we ought never to have come here, if it wasn't for diamonds."

"I hate diamonds; I will not hear of diamonds," said Theo.

There was a cloud on his face as he sat and looked at her. She wandered about the room, and they were both silent for

several minutes—the first unhappy minutes that either of them had passed since they were married, just a month ago.

"Poor child!" Gerald said at last in a low voice. "It was awfully wrong; I ought never to have brought you here."

"Oh, Gerald, forgive me!" she said, and she turned round suddenly, and came towards him with tears in her eyes; so that their first attempt at a quarrel did not succeed.

FLOWERS IN THE FLOWERY LAND.

JOHN CHINAMAN is the cleverest gardener in the world. Everywhere outside his own country, from Montana to Singapore, he has the business in his own hands. In Queensland he gets big crops of delicious vegetables out of soil which, in its unimproved state, is either a hard-baked brick or the hungriest of granite-sand. In Colorado he combines washing the miners' shirts at a shilling apiece (and a good, careful washerman he is) with growing peas and early cabbages. At home he is as indefatigable as he is abroad. He has a great many mouths to feed; and, big as China looks on the map, there is only a limited and actually diminishing amount of land available for crop-growing. A large part of China is mountain—bare, unimprovable rock. You can terrace up to a certain height; and they do it wherever it can be done, and carry earth up on their backs, like the vine-dressers along the Rhine. But there comes a limit to that kind of thing; there are hills that will not be terraced, and vast wildernesses which even Chinese patience has not yet succeeded in making fertile. And, yet more, a great deal of his best land he cannot use for food-growing. As you walk round Shanghai you think that about half the land is waste. You fancy it is left, as large coverts and heather-clad heaths are left where game-preserving flourishes; but if you look closer you see turf-covered mounds. It is a burial-ground. Nowhere else in that neighbourhood will you see a square yard of land that is not under tillage. Half our little wars with the Chinese came from trespassing on these cemeteries. The French at Shanghai had what threatened to be a big row when they wanted to drive a road through one of them. They are "taboo." Sometimes of an evening you may see a village elder walking round and explaining to the youngsters that their ancestor of a hundred

years ago is buried there, and that five mounds off lies that happy father who was raised to the rank of marquis because his son came out first classic and senior wrangler in the final examination. I am speaking of an old burial-ground. In a new one you see the solid, highly-varnished coffins (often carved) lying on the surface. There they are left for a year or two, after which they are thatched or bricked over, according to the wealth of the family, the result being a mausoleum like those set up to several of our Royal Family. This soon gets grown over with grass and weeds, and ends by becoming a mound, still hallowed in the recollection of the elders, still visited on anniversaries with the appointed offerings. The thing to remember is that in China all is above ground; there is no digging of graves; simply laying down of coffins and covering in by-and-by.

In old times they used to bury beside their dead gold and precious stones of all kinds. They are more economical nowadays; one remembers how they burn horses, and birds, and furniture, etc., cut out of gold or red paper, instead of the old offerings, which have grown too costly. In their present state of mind, the Chinese are not likely to take to cremation or to let their grave-fields be desecrated by plough or spade; therefore they are bound to go in for sewage, and if our people out there want to make life pleasanter, let them try to get an imperial edict for deodorising. Our residents cannot complain much about the unhealthiness of the present system. The Chinese are, on the whole, a healthy people. A wicked friend at my elbow, who has been a good deal among them, and from whom I have got a good many hints, says it is the opium that keeps them well. Nothing else, he is sure, would save from fever a man who is paddling all day in a paddy-field, up to his knees in liquid manure. If we leave off sending them opium, they will have to manure still more heavily, for the poppy takes a deal of ground and is a very exhausting crop.

But though food-growing is a necessity at home, John Chinaman always manages to indulge, though it be but on a very small scale, in the luxury of "landscape-gardening." His foreign gardening is done to pay, and it does pay; but for the Flowery Land, to which every Chinese emigrant hopes, at any rate, to be transmitted in his coffin, even if he never sees it again in the flesh, are mostly reserved

the dwarf trees, the miniature bridges, the little ornamental waters, as we see them on the old willow-pattern plates. Ground is so precious, so much being uncomplainingly given up to the dead, that the Chinese gardener has to do a great deal in a small space; and he is wonderfully clever with flowers and vegetables alike, for he has the hereditary experience of centuries. With us landscape gardening is a thing of yesterday, while kitchen gardening only dates, so to speak, from the day before yesterday. The monks did a great deal, but the Reformation discredited gardening, as savouring of fast-days and such like superstition, and Elizabeth used to send to Flanders for a salad. Even Dutch William got those early peas, of which he would not give Mary a taste, from his own country. But in China all sorts of field and garden work literally dates from time immemorial, it has the same halo of religion about it that it had among the Incas of Peru.

Near the City of Luanfou, in Western Honan, is the Mount Po-kou-chan ("of the hundred fruits"). There the Emperor Chen Nung (divine husbandman) is still worshipped in a temple which dates from our sixth century, and is built on the site of one ages older. Centuries before Abraham's sacrifice, Chen Nung, ruler of the little land which afterwards grew into the huge Chinese Empire, was sowing corn, studying the properties of plants, and actually making the first Pents'ao (herbal), of which every century or so has seen a fresh one. Emperors have written these herbals; but the latest, dated 1848, is by a high official, who was successively minister of religion, war, and finance, and, retiring through ill-health, gave up his leisure to this botanical work, which he left in manuscript, and which the Emperor published after his death, giving the writer the title of Yu Lou Nung—the nung, or husbandman of Yu Lou, the district in Honan where he was born. The book has eight hundred plates, and its value is recognised in the Chinese Repository (vol. vi., 1869), and also by Dr. Bretschneider, whose *Early European Researches Into the Flora of China* was published three years ago in Shanghai. The curious thing is that this most modern of Chinese botany books contains portions of the old, old books, even of that of Chen Nung himself. Missionaries have helped us a great deal in learning the truth about the Chinese. They have not always been wise; the

Jesuits of old meddled in politics, the modern French missionary is unscrupulously proselytising. But, all allowance made, they have done good both to the Chinese, by doctoring them, and, above all, by showing them that there are white men with souls above dollars, and to the Europeans, by opening up the language and the literature. Dr. Bretschneider is not a missionary; he has for fifteen years been physician to the Russian Embassy at Peking. But the mission libraries have been of great help to him, as they have to the compilers of that *Botanicon Sinicum*, which Trübner published two years ago; and books like these enable those who have not been in China to realise what a wonderful land it is for flowers and vegetables.

In the old time China must have been rather bare of useful plants. Such everyday vegetables as beans, cucumbers, lucerne, sesame, coriander, were all brought in in the days of the Emperor Wu Ti, who first opened communication with Japan, and by conquering part of Annam, established those rights which have lately come into collision with French aggressiveness. His ambassador, Chang Kien, brought back (B.C. 126) from the Oxus the above-named plants, and also the walnut; and, since then, acclimatising has gone on at a great rate. The date, the banana, the orange, mustard, pea, spinach, and half-a-dozen other plants and trees were brought in at different dates. Maize they seem to have got from America long before Europeans had crossed the Atlantic; though some botanists think the plant is one of the very few which belong alike to the old world and to the new.

Some of the Chinese plant-names are very quaint. Oats are called "little bell corn"; the bean is "worm-plant"; the tiger-lily is "a hundred in one," because of the crowd of little scaly bulbs which form at the roots of the flower-stalks—nay, in some varieties, aboveground, at the bases of the stem-leaves; the betel-nut is "Mr. Guest" (pin-lang), because the first act of civility to a visitor is to use those words in offering it to him. Tea, in common parlance, is "tcha," i.e. gold—"worth its weight in gold;" in the literary language it is "ming," i.e. opening out, because the rolled leaves do this in hot water. The willow, from its vigorous growth, is the emblem of immortality, and its sign is the sun against a folding-door, a branch of this tree being always set up against a door when a sacrifice is to be offered. Talking of signs, this

wonderful Chinese language, which is a whole circle of the sciences in itself, enables the literary Chinaman to express by the letter that he uses, both the natural order and the species to which any plant belongs. People are beginning to change their views about this language of signs. We used to sneer at it as childish, and say that a man was the best part of his life learning how to write. Very true; but, then, when he does know how to write, he knows, by the very fact of being an accomplished scribe, all that Chinese learning has to teach about all the 'ologies.

Horticulture naturally goes hand-in-hand with botany. Abroad the Chinaman is, in the main, a market-gardener. At home he goes in for rare flowers with the recklessness of a Dutchman. A little shrub of that sambac, which smells like orange and rose in one, has sold at Peking for from two pounds to three pounds. A bright-blooming flower, the *Pergularia odoratissima*, has brought from twenty to thirty ounces of silver. Most people know that we owe the Chinese some of our showiest flowers—the aster, the chrysanthemum, the China-pink, the camelia, the begonia, Lord Macartney's hortensia (a kind of hydrangea), etc., but few are aware that the Guernsey-lily, that rare beauty, which exaggerates the crocus and snowdrop habit of putting forth its flowers before its leaves, hails from the Flowery Land. An English ship, with a number of the bulbs on board, was wrecked off the Channel Islands; the bulbs were washed into one of those sandy bays which nestle between the granite cliffs; and the mild Gulf-stream climate did the rest. Why have the Chinese gone in for dwarfing their trees? They manage it wonderfully. Missionaries tell us they have seen cypresses and pine-trees forty years old, and not taller than two feet high. It makes one think of the famous Wistman's wood on Dartmoor, where are "a hundred oaks a hundred feet high;" but, while the weird "forest," where the Wild Hunter of Devon stables his hounds and his black steed during the daytime, are twisted and gnarled into all sorts of elfin shapes, such as Doré revelled in till his trees became instinct with uncanny life, the Chinese dwarfs are miniature trees, not misshapen abortions.

A Chinaman goes in for dwarf trees because they enable him to have, in a strip of ground no bigger than a suburban backyard, samples of all the vegetable growths from Annam to the Peiho river. Their

big trees are mostly grown round the pagodas. Like *Antigone* in the play; who knew she had got to consecrated ground because of the thick growth of forest, in which the nightingales sang all day long, so, in China, when you see groups of the chestnut-leaved oak, the ginkgo, the huge *Pinus bungeana*, whose trunk in its old age gets as white as if it was lime-washed, the *thûja* (our little arbor vitae, there a big tree), whose wood, scented and decay-proof, is used for coffins, and is powdered to make incense, you may know there is a pagoda not far off; and pretty soon you will be guided to it by avenues of bamboos, whose joints are hollowed out to form niches for images. The bamboo is the sacred tree, as useful as the pig, of which they say no part is waste from tip of nose to tip of tail. It is seen everywhere; for, though it likes best the warm swamps of the south, it can, by reason of its very rapid growth, get on very well in the shorter summers of North China. Fortune, whom we sent out thirty years ago to report on the vegetable wealth of China, says that by actual measurement he proved that a bamboo will grow from half to very nearly a whole yard in the twenty-four hours. Anyhow, the kind planted round pagodas reaches in a few months the height of over twenty feet, throwing out no branches for the first seven feet. It is used for everything; the young shoots are as good as asparagus, the pulp makes string and paper, the stems are ready-made water-pipes, as well as forming the strongest of masts and yards. Chinese botany books tell of huge bamboos used to make "dug-outs;" but these are things of the past. It is the emblem of self-sacrifice, for—aloe-like—it dies after flowering; and, say the Chinese, all the cuttings die along with the parent stock, no matter how far off they may have been planted, or how early in the tree's life they may have been taken. To form some idea of the richness of a Chinese shrubbery one need only mention the *ailanthus*, *paulownia*, *catalpa*, four or five kinds of *magnolias*, the *gleditschia* or vegetable soap, the tree peony, the *forsythia*, *weigelia*, *dentzias*, *hydrangeas*, *spiræas*, etc. Were they not right in calling theirs the Flowery Land? And must not a man want close packing as well as dwarfing to get half these into an ordinary town garden?

The Chinese, too, are adepts not only at miniature rockeries, lakelets, rivulets, all within the limits of a lawn-tennis ground,

but where they have scope, at what we call landscape-gardening. In England began the protest against that formality which had lasted on from classical times. But what set the English mind on a new groove? Our Queen Anne gardens were just as formal as those of France under the Great Monarch. Bacon had pleaded for a wilderness and little artificial brushwood-covered hills, but no one had listened to him, and Evelyn's ideas ran in straight lines and stiff hedges as undeviatingly as did those of *Mæcenas's* gardeners. It was going to China and seeing how gracefully nature might be imitated which taught a more excellent way to men like James Cunningham, who, about 1702, brought to Europe the first systematic notes of Chinese botany; and by such men the fashion was set which resulted in that grand change from art to nature, which is credited to the English.

I sometimes wonder that one of those Dukes with whom it is the correct thing to have a Scotchman as head-gardener—thereby setting over themselves a tyrant who thinks himself far superior to the wearer of the strawberry-leaved crown—does not supplement Mr. McThornie with a Chinaman. It would be interesting to learn how these horticultural magicians manage to graft an oak on a chestnut, a vine on a jujube, a quince on an orange, etc. Virgil, when he talks, in his *Second Georgic*, of grafting the nut-tree on the *arbutus*, the pear on the plane-tree, the apple on the mountain-ash, and describes swine crunching their acorns under elms, was only describing what one may see any day in China. The grand reason why the Chinese get on so well with gardening is because they work at it as if they loved it. Genius is "an infinite capacity for taking pains," and this is what they do to an incredible extent. A Chinaman gives up his life to his business. He does not talk about duty, but he does it, contented—as no European can be, for our temperaments are different—in the station to which he is called. No doubt, too, Imperial patronage gives a great impulse to all field-work. Every year the Son of Heaven, imitating the deified Chen Nung, goes forth, at the vernal equinox, clad in imperial yellow, and preceded by the Mayor of Pekin and a whole troop of mandarins and great men, to sow the five kinds of corn. Five is the Chinese sacred number. On a half-decimal system they divide their foot into five inches; they have five ele-

ments—fire, water, wood, metal, earth—five beatitudes, five senses, etc. Chen Nung sowed rice, wheat, the two millets (bird and bearded), and soja (a kind of vetch). Mr. Bretschneider was told by the mandarin-president of the Temple of Agriculture that nowadays the sowing is made with rice, wheat, bearded millet, sorghum, and soja. Nor were the Emperors careful only of cereals. "I would rather," says Kang Hi "get my people a new kind of fruit than build a hundred porcelain towers." Kang Hi, who reigned from 1661 to 1722, was, no doubt, a man of real genius, merciful in victory—a rare wonder in a Chinese—kind to Christians, to whom he gave permission to preach, and who repaid his kindness by saving him from a dangerous conspiracy. But other Emperors have said much the same, some of them carrying utilitarianism to excess, like Hong-wou, the founder of the Ming dynasty, who, when he came back in triumph after having at last driven out the Mongols, was by the governor of some province presented with some moutans (tree-peonies) with marvellously lovely flowers. "Very pretty," said the emperor, as if he had never seen a moutan before; "I wonder what kind of fruit it bears. Be good enough to send me some in the season." The governor, like Girder, the cooper, in *The Bride of Lammermoor*, "stood reproved," and in due time sent his majesty a basket of magnificent peaches, as if they had been the moutan fruit.

A Chinese kitchen-garden contains almost all our vegetables, and many more besides. If they do not care to grow potatoes, except where there are Europeans to eat them, they grow the batata, which is sold boiled at every street-corner. Of the water-lily, sacred to Buddha, they eat the sugary seeds, and also a sort of sago made from its root. "Water-chestnuts," too (eaten by the old lake dwellers in Switzerland), are largely grown. Every canal is full of floating islands of them; and the gathering must look like that picture in this year's *Grosvenor of Athelney in Flood*, where young and old are going about after the apples in boats. Instead of boats put tubs, each pushed with a bamboo-pole by a yellow man or woman, and paint two or three upsets, for John Chinaman is full of fun, and those who have seen a water-chestnut harvesting say that everybody is on the broad grin, and accepts a ducking with the same good-humour with which he gives one. They cultivate fungi, too, hurving

the rotten stump of a tree which bears harmless ones, and so ensuring a crop. One kind, the lin-chi, is one of the emblems of immortality. It gets as dry as those honey-combed fungi which they eat in mid-France, and "keeps good" for years. The bonzes use it as the foundation of their ambrosia, and picture their gods with lin-chi in their hands. The "five fruits" are peach (sign of love, because it blossoms in winter), apricot, plum, chestnut, and jujube. The wild apricot is valuable for the oil extracted from its kernels. This first came into use, say the Chinese botany books, in our fourteenth century. A good and wise physician lived in a district so poor that he scarcely ever got a fee; so, having found out the use of apricot-oil, he said: "If you can't pay you must do this. Let every patient plant a wild apricot on that bare hill to the east." Fifteen years went by; the hill was pretty well covered. "Now," said the good man, "I am growing old, and after me you will perhaps not be able to get your doctoring gratis. Let the village undertake to keep up this apricot-orchard that has cost you nothing. The oil will not only pay a doctor, and buy as much medicine as you can want, but it will also do a good deal towards supporting your old men and your orphans."

There is no need to speak of tea, of which the supply is so exceeded by the demand that the Chinese mix it with all sorts of foreign leaves. A French missionary, Armand David, corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, and clever botanist, has found, in the mountains of Moupin, towards the Thibet frontier, a hairy-leaved tea which he thinks may be grown in the dry air of the Dauphiny hills; but this will not help us much now that the French, who used to make honest goods, have been driven to adulteration by the failure of their phylloxera-killed vines. People who sophisticate their wine will not stick at medicating their tea.

Wax-trees and tallow-trees are invaluable to the Buddhists, who, of course, must burn no animal fat on their altars. There are half-a-dozen trees and plants which make better paper than the bamboo—what we call rice-paper, for instance, comes from the paper-mulberry. A Chinese nettle and a giant hibiscus make excellent rope; and the ramia has its leaves covered with threads just in the right state for spinning. When Virgil said, "The Seres comb from leaves a slender fleece," one used to fancy he was sneaking of silk, confounding in

fact the worm with the food it eats; but the latest idea is that some notion of the ramia and its produce had travelled as far as the Greek naturalists on whom Virgil relied. If any of your friends are homœopaths you will have heard plenty about rhus; one of the many kinds, the rhus vernix, makes along with the elaeo-cocca (added because its juice is fatal to insects) the famous lacquer. Great at dyeing, the Chinese have managed to find out vegetable mordants; hair-dyeing they manage in a peculiar way. They drink their dye. A six months' course of some vegetable decoction is said to be infallible; and was regularly used, we are told, by the Christians to darken the hair of their European priests, that so they might escape detection. Nearly all their dyes are vegetable; the imperial yellow being got from the root of the curcuma; saffron and gardenia flowers, and mignonette, and all the other yellow dyes, being held unworthy of this great object.

And, now, to prove what was said about their skill in landscape-gardening, let us say a word about the Pekin Summer Palace Park. Mr. Swinhoe and Sir Hope Grant both paint it in glowing colours—such a pleasure-garden as Kublai Khan planned round his “wondrous dome, by Alp, the sacred river.” “Twelve miles of pebbled paths leading through groves of magnificent round lakes, into picturesque summer-houses; as you wandered along, herds of deer would amble away from before you, tossing their antlered heads. Here a solitary building would rise fairy-like from a lake, reflected in the blue water on which it seemed to float. There a sloping path would carry you into the heart of a mysterious cavern leading out on to a grotto in the bosom of another lake. The variety of the picturesque was endless, and charming in the extreme. The resources of the designer appear to have been unending.” And what the Emperor had in its full glory round his summer palace, every Chinaman who has made a little money tries to have on a small scale round his house. It is the gardens which, in the absence of many of our modes of sanitation, keep the dense populations of Chinese cities tolerably healthy, for trees are great absorbers of bad and diffusers of good gases. We have a great deal still to learn from them in the way of gardening, and it is no use crying down our climate—the climate of North China is a very harsh, ungenial one, far worse for both men and plants than ours.

It is not the climate that is in fault, but the gardeners; ours do not put the heart and the patience into their work that John Chinaman does into his.

OUR SHINING RIVER.

VIII.

It was evident that Mrs. Pyecroft's alarm was not without cause. If her husband had been dealing with the trust-property in a way unknown to his co-trustee, Mr. Boothby, then the meeting of the latter with the purchaser of the property would be like to open the eyes of both. But then, as Mr. Boothby would himself be liable to make good the deficiency, he was hardly likely to blazon the discovery to the world. On the contrary, he would be only anxious to hush the matter up, and obtain some security from Pyecroft to save himself from loss. And I could suggest an admirable plan.

“Give me Claudia, and I will myself become the surety.”

“But you do not see it all,” cried Mrs. Pyecroft.

And, to say the truth, I did not. It was one of those complicated lawyer's networks of trusts and settlements, devised by men long dead and gone, in which the present generation were rolling about helpless. Claudia's brother dead, and Claudia herself became the one entitled to the money—that is, when she came of age, as if she died before that event, everything went to Charlwood. So that as far as the next few years went, none of the parties concerned could give Mr. Pyecroft a valid release. But Mrs. Pyecroft had been told by a lawyer she consulted, that if Charlwood married his cousin Claudia, then the whole of the ‘eggs being, as it were, in one basket, the trust might be considered as discharged, and Charlwood could exonerate his uncle from all the consequences of his rashness.

For this end had Mrs. Pyecroft been working ever since her son's death, and now she saw all her projects overturned by Charlwood's unfortunate attachment, as she deemed it. It did not seem to her a cruel thing that Claudia's happiness should be sacrificed, when such momentous issues were at stake as the family honour and the family position in the world. Her husband, however, Mrs. Pyecroft observed bitterly, was too indifferent in the matter. If he had acted with firmness, the affair would have been

settled before this; but he did not seem to realise the danger of his position. Perhaps it was better that he should not realise it.

At this moment we heard Mr. Pycroft's voice calling upon his wife to take her seat in the carriage.

"We have been much interested in this little hostelry," he observed when we rejoined him, "and especially in the sign it bears, in which, I fancy, is wrapped up a morsel of local history—The Beetle and Wedge. Now what would you make of that?"

"I should say," replied Claudia flippantly, "that the wedge was used for crushing the beetle."

"The beetle referred to," rejoined Mr. Pycroft mildly, "is not one of the coleoptera. It is a huge wooden mallet, and, with the wedge, is chiefly used, I believe, for splitting wood. Where wood is much used for firing, the beetle and wedge are still in constant use, and I should gather from this sign that at some perhaps distant date, a hardy race of lumberers, as the Americans call them, settled upon this river, and supplied the rising settlements on its banks, and London as their chief, with firewood. The forest which once existed here attracted, no doubt, many of these lumberers—

"How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke

—and the alehouse which arose to supply their wants boasted this emblematical representation of their calling. They are gone, and we should seek in vain for any other record of their existence."

Mrs. Pycroft raised hands and eyes, as much as to say, "Here is the poor man worrying himself about fabulous woodcutters when his own existence is endangered!" And then they drove off, and we embarked once more from the crazy old ferry-boat, where a tottering old fellow, the very model of an old woodcutter, with a tall hat and a smock frock, and gentlemanly manners—the super-gentlemanly manners of an old-fashioned peasant—loosed the painter, and sent us on our voyage with a grateful benediction. And so we floated lazily down, conscious that the day's work is over, and looking out for restful spots, where the white water-lilies lie in bright constellations—or where some fisherman has moored his punt in the shade, and where there is all the excitement of watching the float without the responsibility of fishing. But the fish thus

watched for never bites, and the rosy old gentleman who is fishing looks at us as though he thought there was an evil eye among us that scared away the fish. And thus we drop gently down to Goring Lock.

Of the places which appeal at once to the sympathies of the passer-by, and which say, in unmistakable language, stay a while, none are more explicit in this way than the twin villages of Streatley and Goring. On one side rises the steep, bluff down, with its smooth, turfy covering, and its crown of ancient forest; on the other a chain of lesser hills, all partly woodland, the edge of those erst wild Chiltern Hundreds, where once the hart and the boar roamed at will, and the outlaw lay in wait for passers-by. In the gorge between, the river spreads itself out, and descends in many mimic falls, with a pleasant, sympathetic splash and murmur, with islets among swift streams, and sparkling shallows, over which stretches the plain old wooden bridge, the hyphen that unites the twin villages, with their red roofs and grey church-towers. The lock, too, is a feature, with the neat cottage of the lock-keeper, and the mill-stream, where a cluster of boats are lying moored to the bank, and the white tents of some campers-out, who have lit their fires and put their pots on to boil, while the smoke curls gracefully among the trees.

The lock-keeper, too, greets us pleasantly, as if we had been long expected and provided for, and seems to consider it a personal compliment to himself, that we have determined to stay here for a while. He can promise us every enjoyment the riverside can afford: plenty of fish for those who can catch them, charming drives, romantic walks; even the weather shall be favourable, and he brings out his favourite barometer to justify the prophecy. But our friendly lock-keeper advises us to lose no time in securing quarters, for it is Saturday, and the next train will bring down the London division, when probably every cockloft in the village will be at a premium.

This last announcement is rather startling, for we had not realised before that London was so near at hand. So far we had seemed to be among the Midlands; people we met came from all points of the compass, it was a chance whether from Bristol or Lincoln, Bath or Birmingham; the Londoner was rather an exception. But now we had crossed the vague circle of the Metropolitan radius. We might measure our

miles henceforth from Whitehall Stairs or London Bridge.

It was only, indeed, by the luck of finding rooms that somebody from London had engaged beforehand, and had just telegraphed to say he did not want, that we managed to secure a local habitation in Goring. But once established in our domicile, and it was pleasant to look forward to the arrival of the London train. Claudia, especially, was agreeably excited. The prospect of such a stir and movement, after the quiet seclusion of country life, had a distinct charm for her, and the distant roar of the approaching train seemed to herald something altogether novel and delightful.

The train stopped and passed on again, and then came the rush; first the whirl of the local flys, three at least, crammed with luggage and passengers, skirmishers with light handbags, family men urging along recalcitrant wives and offspring, other shrewd fellows, who had secured the railway-porters and their local knowledge, with the grim determination not to be shaken off till provided for. The superior speed of the local fly was compensated for by a certain want of flexibility. Thus, having first missed their aim, the party in a fly are outflanked and cut off by the skirmishing detachment. Thus a lady, gorgeously equipped, and having a husband in attendance, and two curiously shaved black poodles, who has been loudly demanding dressing-rooms and bath-rooms, is reduced to accept, with thankfulness, a single room over a butcher's shop.

But when this momentary bustle was over, the village assumed once more its tranquil, peaceful aspect. Except for a general flavour of mutton-chops in the quiet street, and a feeling of fried ham in the air, there is nothing to show for the inroad of visitors. Our landlord, happily, has just returned from Reading with an ample store of provisions, for it seems that the resources of the neighbourhood are limited, and thus we are relieved from any apprehensions of a scarcity before Monday morning.

Our dinner-party, however, is not a very gay one. Mrs. Pyecroft has not got over the alarm excited by the supposed machinations of Mr. Thomas, although I have done my best to show her that her fears are chimerical. Claudia, too, is moved by vague agitation, the former frank friendliness of her manner being replaced by a certain shy reticence, and mademoiselle regards us both with awakened mistrust,

as if fearing that her pupil has learnt the forbidden verb in spite of all her precautions. Only Mr. Pyecroft retains his bland and courteous composure, and it seems that his wife has carefully concealed from him her doubts and fears.

And then Mrs. Pyecroft suggests, with rather forced playfulness, that she and I should take a quiet sail together down the river. We had a few private matters to talk over, and the rest must amuse themselves in their own way.

"I had hoped for a rubber," suggested Mr. Pyecroft mildly.

"We shall be back in time for that, perhaps," replied his wife, "and perhaps we may pick up a player on our voyage."

Of course, I saw what Mrs. Pyecroft had in hand—a cutting-out expedition, such as we read of in the exploits of the British Navy. There was grim determination in the whole pose of her figure, and she was provided, no doubt, with sets of moral manacles, in case the prisoner to be captured should prove refractory. I admired the woman's courage and determination, although I could not breathe any fervent prayers for the success of the enterprise.

It was a lovely evening, and the valley was filled with golden light, while the river, shining bright between its darkened banks, gave us the feeling as if we were about to put off among the clouds, with a rift of bright sky below us. Boats were shooting to and fro, and the splash of oars, and their gentle thud against the rowlocks, echoed pleasantly in the evening air. There was only wanting the voice of song on the water to make the surroundings perfect.

"A great deal too perfect," I said firmly to Mrs. Pyecroft, "to be devoted to unpleasant business; and, anyhow, it was a shame to leave Claudia behind."

"Very well," said Mrs. Pyecroft after a moment's thought; "Claudia can come. Mademoiselle, you must go back and play piquet with my husband."

Claudia, who had looked doleful enough at being left behind, now sprang joyously into the boat, and we pushed off into the bright, shining river. And Claudia was the first to break the silence.

"We are going to pay a visit, mother?" she said interrogatively.

Mrs. Pyecroft nodded assent.

"And we shall see Rebecca," continued Claudia in a meditative manner; "and I am glad of that, for I want to see if she is so charming as some people think her."

"She is very well in her way," rejoined

Mrs. Pyecroft with assumed indifference. "But, Claudia, a great deal depends upon this visit, and I have brought you, thinking that you have some influence with your cousin Charlwood, and that among us we shall persuade him to leave these objectionable people."

Claudia's lip curled at this, but she made no direct reply, and presently a turn in the river brought us in sight of a wooded bank, beneath which were moored two or three house-boats, all lighted up, with rows of Chinese lanterns festooned along the sides, making the quiet river-bank look like some gaily-lighted street. The whole scene suggested rather China or Japan than our sober English clime—the bright, clear air, the sense of indefinite distance, the gleam of the coloured lights all reflected in the water, and presently the voice of a singer, though all China or Japan could not produce such a fresh, rich voice as that we heard thrilling over the water.

The song was trite and commonplace enough—one of the most recent ditties of the music-halls—but the expression was everything, and Rebecca—for she, doubtless, was the singer—put a soul into that song which turned the twopenny-halfpenny thing into gold.

"What a charming voice!" murmured Claudia. "It is like what one reads of the sirens."

"Who turned their lovers into pigs, surely," put in Mrs. Pyecroft savagely.

As we approached the little floating river settlement, the air was charged with the faint incense of tobacco, with a slightly vinous flavour, suggestive of an hotel bar, but not otherwise unpleasant. The windows of The Crab were wide open, and we could see the table spread with the remains of a luxurious dessert, while the guests, among whom we could make out Charlwood and Mr. Boothby, were seated around in various easy attitudes. Mrs. Thomas, with one arm hanging over the side of the boat, was fanning herself vigorously with the other, while at one end of the room, Rebecca, seated at the piano, looked over her shoulder, engaged in animated conversation. As we touched the barge, causing a gentle thrill to pass through it, Mrs. Thomas gave a cry of alarm:

"La! there's a boat coming aboard us!"

"We are not intruding, I hope!" said Mrs. Pyecroft in her clearest, most dulcet tones, as we made good our landing on the enemy's gangway. "We heard you were

in the neighbourhood, and have come to pay a friendly call."

"Delighted, I'm sure, ma'am," cried Mr. Thomas, laying aside his long clay and springing to his feet. "Wife, wake up! Here's Mrs. Pyecroft come to pay you a visit."

"I'm sure you do me proud, ma'am," said Mrs. Thomas, curtsying, having forgotten her company manners in the confusion, and reverting to the accustomed ways of former years.

Rebecca looked on from her seat by the piano with curling lip, and interrupted the further flow of civilities by dashing forth some sounding chords on the piano, as she sang in bravura style:

"Oh, come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"

"Your daughter?" asked Mrs. Pyecroft sweetly, turning to Rebecca. "Your charming voice, my dear, has enchanted us on the river. My daughter compared you to a siren."

"What!" cried Mr. Thomas, flushing indignantly. "To one o' them foghorns! My daughter's voice, acknowledged by connoisseurs to be first-class, compared to a nasty booming foghorn! You gentle-folks are trying to take a rise out of me."

Charlwood roared with laughter, and Mr. Boothby foggily joined in the chorus, raising Mr. Thomas's rising ire to boiling-over point.

It was an unfortunate incident, and shows how much depends on unavoidable chances, and how

The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley.

For how could Mrs. Pyecroft have foreseen that her classical allusion to the sea-nymphs who sang Ulysses out of his senses should be taken by Mr. Thomas nautically instead of classically? Indeed, I don't suppose that Mrs. Pyecroft had ever heard of the steam siren, the latest and loudest development of the foghorn. At the same time, it was vain to try to enlighten Mr. Thomas, or to soothe his dignity, wounded in its tenderest part. The affair was like one of those sudden broils that flared out among Scots borderers, when it only remained for the most peaceful of men to whip out his whinger and choose sides.

For Mrs. Thomas, weak at times, was always prompt on her husband's side in anything like a row, and poor Mrs. Pyecroft's tact and suavity were useless to her in this war of words. Like a skilful swimmer

in a whirlpool, she could only throw up her arms and resign herself to fate.

"Come, Claudia," cried Mrs. Pyecroft at last, after vainly striving to be heard, wrapping her mantle round her with dignity, "this is no place for us." And we took to our boat, feeling for the moment as if we had received a crushing defeat, and quite demoralised.

But we had not pulled very far up stream towards Goring when we heard the splash of oars behind us, and presently we were hailed from the river by Charlwood's voice, still indistinct with laughter, and perhaps, to a certain extent, with wine.

"Had an awful row with the old chap after you left," explained Charlwood when his boat came alongside. "He was so wild with Boothby and me for laughing at him that he ordered us both out of the ship. And here we are!"

"Insufferable scoundrel!" broke out Boothby in his deep tones. "Mrs. Pyecroft, I'm humiliated, degraded, that you should have had to listen to such language in my presence. I'll never speak to the villain again!"

"Oh, he'll be all right in the morning," said Charlwood lightly. "All right, and grovelling to be forgiven."

"As far as I am concerned, Mr. Boothby," said Mrs. Pyecroft graciously, "I can't regret a circumstance that has given us your society. For you will spend the evening with us, and play a rubber."

"Delighted, my dear madam," cried Boothby. His daughters, he told us, had gone back to Oxford to stay with their friend in the long cloak, and he was looking forward to a few days' quiet enjoyment away from his womankind.

"And you have fallen out of the frying-pan into the fire," cried Mrs. Pyecroft. "For that ungallant speech you shall be condemned to an entirely masculine rubber. There's yourself, my husband, Mr. Penrice, and Charlwood."

"Don't count me in," said Charlwood huskily; "I've half promised to meet some fellows at The Swan for a quiet turn at Nap. But I'll come in later, perhaps."

With this half-promise Mrs. Pyecroft was obliged to be content. After all, it was a great success to have carried off Mr. Boothby—to have been routed, and yet to have secured the honours of war.

Mrs. Pyecroft had a long talk with Mr. Boothby, with a result quite satisfactory to her. He had promised that he would not do anything to bring Mr. Pyecroft into

trouble, although, of course, he wanted to make himself secure. At the same time, it was evident that Mr. Thomas had gained from Boothby all the information he wanted; and if Charlwood were to join in the plot, being, as Boothby said, in legal terms, the remainder-man, and so with an equitable interest in the property, no doubt between them they could set the Court of Chancery to work with crushing effect. But then Charlwood was very unlikely to join in the plot, except under strong pressure, for one of his good points is a warm attachment to his family. Altogether, Mrs. Pyecroft is relieved of a good deal of her anxiety, and sets out her whistle with a light heart. Mademoiselle is to play in the first rubber, and falls to myself as partner, while Pyecroft and Boothby play against us.

Mademoiselle has a good deal to say as the game progresses. First of all a running commentary on the cards as they are played. Aha! le pique or le carreau! as the case may be, as if there were an element of surprise or of a dramatic situation in each round. The court-cards, as they appear, she salutes with each its familiar name. Lancelot, for the knave of clubs, Hector, and so on. The kings she saluted with something like awe—mademoiselle is of a family that has always been royalist—and with high-sounding names that recall the heroes of Racine and Corneille. Boothby is greatly disturbed by these proceedings, which he characterises, sotto voce, as "jabber."

"Madame," he cries warningly, "whist, if you please—this is whist."

"I know," replies mademoiselle; "what you call be tranquil—hold your tongue. Très-bien!" and she pats him on the arm as if he had made a splendid joke. But still her tongue runs on, and Boothby loses his head in the constant turmoil, forgets his small cards, and trumps his partner's trick. In the end, Boothby and Co. lose five shillings on the rubber, and the former pays down his money with a stern promptitude, that shows how deeply he is moved.

"Ah, how I have been well amused," cries mademoiselle. But she will tempt fortune no more, and retires with her spoil to her embroidery-frame, while Mrs. Pyecroft takes the vacant place, but as her husband's partner. And then the game progresses in solemn silence. Claudia comes to look over my hand, but puts a question now and then between the deals, and Boothby looks over at us every now

and then, approvingly. For Boothby is winning, and in a good temper again. It is a pleasant family party, tranquil, and yet not dull; and through the open windows, the summer breeze rustles in, while the mill-stream murmurs and the noise of falling water sounds gently in the distance. From a distant ale-house come sounds of rustic revelry, the traditional chorus of the English peasant, which is almost pathetic in its monotonous burden, that suggests thatched roofs, and feeble twinklings from cottage-windows, and tired women fallen asleep with babies in their laps, and the rustle and hush of country lanes.

Our tranquillity is rather rudely interrupted. The outer door opens, there is an unsteady footstep in the passage, and an unpleasantly sallow and vacant face presents itself in the sitting-room. Mrs. Pycroft starts up in alarm. It is Charlwood; is he ill? No, he is all right, he assures us, and sinks into a chair. To do him justice, he thinks himself perfectly sober, and articulates with slow distinctness in order to make the same abundantly evident. If only he would not talk, all would be well, for Mrs. Pycroft makes strong efforts to hide his condition from her daughter. It is one of his bad bilious attacks coming on, she says, and will have him lie upon the sofa, with a pillow for his head. But Charlwood rejects these attempts with scorn. He persists in talking to Claudia in long, rigmarole sentences, to which there is neither beginning nor end, and Claudia regards him all the while in awe and pitying wonder.

At last Mr. Boothby rises to go; he can support the situation no longer. Boothby is quite at home anywhere in these parts, and mine host of The Bull will surely give him a corner to sleep in. But with Charlwood it is different; he is not in a fit condition to roam about by himself. There is nothing for it but to put him in my room. It is a great trial of friendship to have to look after a man in Charlwood's condition, but I manage to get him to bed, and soon he falls into deep and heavy sleep. What an excellent wife Rebecca will make for him! I cannot help thinking. On such occasions she would put him to bed and give him a hearty scolding next morning, without thinking too much about it. But for Claudia, in such a case, what trouble, degradation, horror, followed by permanent estrangement and lifelong misery!

It is one of those nights when it is no hardship to be without the shelter of a

roof. The air is dry, warm, and exhilarating; the river flows on without the vestige of a mist on its surface; and standing in the middle of the long wooden bridge, I seem to be sailing away between sky and river. What swirls of darkness under the trees, and bright, radiant streaks beyond! and the sky, although it is midnight, is still warm with daylight. There are light, fleecy clouds over the old church-tower, and the sky is bright behind it, but the shadows lie black and gloomy over the churchyard wall, and the pool below looks dark and fathomless, with an edge of ghostly white where the mill-stream rushes in.

Something seems to attract me to the hill which rises with such a noble sweep against the sky, to cross the bridge and rouse the sleepy toll-gatherer, and tramp through the sleeping village—the twin village of Streatley. There are tall, prim houses, and another church, not so solemn-looking as our Goring church, but lying back in its graveyard among the trees, and then a narrow lane takes me upon the open down.

Oh, who will o'er the downs so free?

Indeed, there is always a sense of freedom when you are on the chalk down, and the soft turf has a distinctly hospitable feeling, as it seems to assert itself as the feather-bed of primitive humanity. A wide, vague landscape stretches below, with the river showing here and there in silvery folds. The villages below seem to crouch in the darkness, but there are railway signal-lamps cheerfully shining, and a goods-train is fussing about, running off and returning with much banging and clanking of trucks. The beech-wood behind looks too solemn and ghost-like to venture into. It is not so many years since iron traps with cruel teeth were set in the woods, and spring-guns to blow the life out of trespassers. Will future ages believe it? And possibly a trap or two may have been left, forgotten in the bracken. But hark! a nightingale begins its liquid song from the copse below—a song full of strange sadness and delight. Presently in the far distance another bird, if a nightingale be a bird and not a wandering spirit—but anyhow another voice takes up the challenge, and the sweet concert thrills the soul with delight.

There is not long to wait for daybreak—the sky is already bright in the east, and reveals a steadfast solemn cloudscape, tier upon tier of grey quiet clouds, which presently show rifts and openings, charged

with golden light. Overhead a gauzy curtain of light clouds seems to be swept onwards towards the rising sun, catching a sudden rosy glow as it flies. The hills are still grey and dull, but the light steals among the roofs and gables of the sleeping villages, while the orange light is reflected in the river margin, and bridge and lock shine forth with glittering distinctness. Chanticleer wakes and crows full lustily, and a sudden vehement outburst of jubilant twittering rises from every tree and bush. Rooks fly hastily over the fences into the fields, horses awake and shake themselves, and cattle begin to low; and thus the day is fairly launched without mankind seeming to trouble itself much about it.

It gives one a sense of high superiority to the rest of the world to have seen the sun rise, and to have discovered a part of the day that nobody knows about—the hours of good daylight that people sleep through. But this is a feeling that soon exhausts itself, and is succeeded by the sad conviction that the sleeping world has the best of it, and an intolerable drowsiness that makes the hot sun-glow seem an overwhelming burden. But now that it is full daylight I can make out our boat, sleeping like the rest, in the cool backwater. And descending thereto, I enjoy the soundest sleep in the world, rocked by the soft pulsations of the river. And after that, and a delicious plunge into the cool, gleaming pool, the little village just awakening to life has a delicious aspect of Paradise, with its fresh gardens, and bright lawns, where a kind of Sunday feeling pervades everything.

At our inn the rosy-checked maid has yawningly unbarred the door, and looks sleepily out, but Claudia's blind is up, and through the open window I hear her singing at her toilette, in a fresh, sweet voice that has not the power of Rebecca's, but with a delicate timbre of its own. And Charlwood, how is he faring now? I open the door, but there is nobody within. Charlwood has disappeared, leaving only a pencilled note on the table:

"I could not face the home-party after last night. Adieu!"

MARDON HALL.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

THE next day my picture was not touched. Mr. Dallas painted all the morning at his large picture of the banqueting-hall, and in the afternoon he told me he was going to drive with Lady Helen to the

Penton Rocks, about eight miles from us, and that he should be back close on supper-time. The carriage was to pick him up at the park gate.

The afternoon seemed very long, but when the evening came, and I was counting every minute till supper-time, a boy arrived with a message which Mr. Dallas had given him as he drove past the park gate to tell us not to wait for him, as he was going to dine with Colonel St. Quentin. The day following—oh, how well I remember these days and all that happened in them!—Mr. Dallas said:

"Now, Nancy, to-day I must make up for my holiday yesterday; if you will give me a sitting this afternoon, I will do my best to finish the sketch I am making of you, but if you are to be otherwise occupied, you know, I can find plenty to do."

"I should like you to go on with my picture," I said half timidly; "I sha'n't be busy this afternoon."

I felt that since these ladies had come to break in upon my dreamland, a barrier had risen between Mr. Dallas and me.

"You're sure you hadn't too much of it the other day?" he asked kindly.

"Oh no," I answered; "oh no; I want to stand for you." He thanked me with such a pleasant look, that I took courage to say: "You aren't going out again this evening, are you, Mr. Dallas?"

"I don't know, Nancy," he said; "that depends mostly on whether Lady Helen St. Quentin is kind enough to ask me."

"Oh," I said, and I could hear that I spoke in a tone of disappointment, "then you are nearly sure to go!"

"Why, Nancy," asked Mr. Dallas, "do you want me this evening—is it some particular occasion?"

"Oh no, sir," I answered; "it's no particular occasion; but I—I only wanted to know."

I was going to say, "I like you best to be here," but I checked myself.

"We shall see," he said; "I'll tell you later on; but, anyway, you'll be at the terrace steps at two o'clock, won't you?"

I said I would, and then I bethought myself to ask if the ladies were coming to Mardon that day.

"I believe so," he said, "and I hope so. Lady Doris takes a great interest in this picture I have begun, and I shall like to hear what she says of it as it goes on, for she has a very clear judgment, and perfect taste in matters of art. I always listen to her opinion of my work."

"It will make me very nervous if they are there, sir, especially if they make any remarks," I said boldly, for I felt irritated at the thought of not having him to myself, even for my picture. Of course, if they were there, I should count for nothing.

"Why should you be more nervous of Lady Doris than of me?" he said merrily. "She is far too kind-hearted and well-bred to make any remarks that could hurt you. You will see she will only comment upon my painting or on my idea."

I could not tell him just how I felt about it, and as I stood hesitating, he said:

"It is only because Lady Doris is a stranger to you that you feel like that. You must take my word for it that she is as beautiful as she looks; and that is giving her no small praise, is it?"

But Mr. Dallas's praise of Lady Doris did not reassure me at all. I hoped with all my heart that she would not be able to come; that a headache, or a thunder-storm, or anything else, would keep her away.

However, when I got into the garden, after helping Aunt Libby to wash the dinner-things, I found them already there, talking with Mr. Dallas.

Lady Helen had a book in her hand, and when Mr. Dallas began to paint, with Lady Doris near him, she sat down on a camp-stool, and said:

"As you are both absorbed in art, I will give my attention to literature. I shall be quite as intellectually employed as you, for I am going to read Hermann and Dorothea."

"In the original, or a translation?" asked Mr. Dallas.

"I don't affect translations," said Lady Helen, putting on a mock serious air. "To read a translation is to look at a landscape through blue spectacles."

"Well," said Mr. Dallas, "perhaps you won't mind reading the choice passages aloud, for Hermann and Dorothea is a very favourite story of mine."

"Do," said Lady Doris. "It is a great favourite of mine, too. And besides," she added with an arch laugh, "it will repress any tendency towards vain babbling. You remember what Colonel St. Quentin said last night about idle chatter."

They all laughed. I felt awkward and uncomfortable standing there, hearing all they said, but only half understanding, and not being able to join in it at all.

Mr. Dallas was quite right. Lady Doris would make no remark about me; she

scarcely seemed to notice that I was there. That was even more mortifying.

Presently Lady Helen began to read, in a language which I did not understand, something which, from the measured rise and fall of her voice, I judged to be poetry. Now and then she stopped, and they talked together about what she had been reading. From their remarks I gathered that it was a German story about a rich young man who fell in love at first sight with a poor girl. I made up my mind to ask Mr. Dallas to tell me the story some time.

"It is a beautiful description of Dorothea, isn't it?" said Lady Doris; "doesn't she seem to stand before you like a person whom you meet by chance on the road, and who compels your attention by her dignity and simplicity? You see every detail of her dress and every feature of her face, once and for always. Mr. Dallas, why don't you paint a Dorothea?"

"I've often thought of it," answered Mr. Dallas—"often."

"Well, then," said Lady Doris, "you must carry out your idea. I've often wished to see a really good picture of Hermann and Dorothea by the well, looking down at one another's reflections in the water."

"Yes," answered Mr. Dallas, his face lighting as he spoke with pleasure and sympathy; "yes; that is just the scene I have always wished to paint; but I would not try to do it unless you would consent to be my model for Dorothea; you are the only person I can imagine as Dorothea."

"Mr. Dallas—Mr. Dallas!" cried Lady Helen, "what did you say the other day about paying compliments? Didn't you say that an indirect compliment was the most to be condemned?"

But Lady Doris did not speak; she was standing close behind Mr. Dallas, with her colour slightly heightened, and her eyes bent down.

He turned, and looked at her, instead of answering Lady Helen, with an expression on his face that I had never seen before, so full of tenderness, of passion, and of admiration. Their eyes met, and their gaze seemed to me to last for ever. He murmured some words which I did not hear; but I saw her colour deepen. My heart, as I looked at them, seemed to jump into my throat; my eyes swam with burning tears, and Lady Helen's voice, as she began to read again, sounded muffled.

Lady Doris bent down and answered Mr. Dallas; the happiness in both their

faces was perfect. He laid his hand gently on hers as she spoke to him, and she did not draw it away. I could bear no more. I darted down the steps and across the garden, paying no heed to Mr. Dallas's voice, which called after me:

"What is it, Nancy—whatever is the matter?"

Some minutes after I was safely locked in my room, I heard him at the door, talking to Aunt Libby; their voices came up to me clearly through the open window:

"I'm so sorry," Mr. Dallas was saying; "I noticed she looked rather pale, but I was selfish enough to want to finish what I was doing. You'll tell her I'm very sorry, won't you?"

"Oh, it'll be nothing, sir," was Aunt Libby's reassuring answer; "she's a little out of sorts. We noticed it the other evening—her father and me. It's a trying time of year for young folks, and she's overgrown her strength, though she do look lusty. I'll make her some camomile-tea—that's what she wants."

Poor Aunt Libby! she had no notion of any ailment young people could have out of reach of the healing powers of camomile-tea, and when I told her that evening, after Mr. Dallas had gone to Bankwell with the ladies, that her remedy would do me no good, she was quite vexed at what she called my obstinacy.

"I assure you, Aunt Libby," I said, "that it would do me no good if I drank enough to drown myself."

"Of course it wouldn't," she answered testily, "if you drank enough to drown yourself; but if you took half a glass fasting, every morning, for nine days—you'd see!"

The days passed on after this slowly and heavily for me, but apparently for Mr. Dallas lightly enough. I did not see much of him, for when his friends were with him, of course I could not go to him, and he spent nearly all his time with them. My picture was finished as far as he intended to finish it before going back to his studio in London. He had said everything that was kind to me about my abrupt disappearance on that unhappy day, and asked me to forgive him for being so thoughtless as to keep me standing so long when I had been busy all the morning; but on the few occasions that he talked to me now I did not feel happy, and I had no longer any inclination to tell him all my little troubles. The presence of Lady Doris and my misery as I watched her

with Mr. Dallas had not only betrayed my own secret to me, but had opened my eyes to the great gulf that rank and education had placed between him and me. I had never fancied that his kindly interest in me had anything lover-like in it, but I had allowed my own thoughts to dwell unceasingly upon him, so that I had made a sort of appropriation of him in my mind, without thinking that the day must come when he would go out of my life—or, if I had thought of that, I had certainly fancied that as long as he was at Mardon, I should have him all to myself. Now that Lady Doris had come and broken the spell, I felt as if I could never forgive her for being so beautiful and so graceful, and for the influence she had with Mr. Dallas.

At last the time of his stay was coming to an end, for he had arranged to travel up to London with Colonel St. Quentin and his party, and he was hurrying to finish some sketches he was taking in the park before he should go.

One afternoon when the sun was blazing down from a sky such as we do not see half-a-dozen times in a summer, Aunt Libby asked me to walk to Bankwell for her. It was on some important business which could not be put off till the cool of the evening, because it was to do with her Post Office Savings Bank-book. Before I started Mr. Dallas said to me:

"As you are going to Bankwell, Nancy, will you be good enough to take a note to The Peacock for me; and, if you have time, will you wait for an answer? I cannot spare the time to go over there myself this afternoon, so you will be doing me a service."

The letter was addressed to Lady Doris Romaine. It was the first time I had ever seen her surname, and in the first feeling of curiosity and interest I forgot to feel angry. I murmured the name over to myself,—it sounded so beautiful, so like herself with her stately figure and gentle face. But as I walked slowly along the path through the park and the low-lying meadows beyond, which was the pleasantest way to Bankwell, I remembered myself, and I scarcely took note of my footsteps, so engrossed was I in my inexpressible misery.

When I had done my commission at the post-office, I went to The Peacock to deliver the note.

"I am to wait for an answer," I said, as I gave it to a servant.

Mrs. Jackson, the landlady, came bustling

past as I spoke. She read the address and said :

"The ladies are out, Nancy, but they may be in at any moment. If you are to wait, you shall go into the garden-room, for that's the coolest place, and you look very hot. It's their sitting-room, you know," she said, as she opened the door for me to go in. "Sit down and make yourself comfortable. I'm busy with the dinner."

I sat down on the old-fashioned sofa, and settled myself to wait. I looked all round the room, which the presence of these ladies had changed so much from its general appearance. I tried to fancy Mr. Dallas spending his evenings there, and passing in and out through the French-window to the garden which sloped to the river. I wished very much to examine the different things that lay about on the tables, but I did not dare to. At last my eyes fell upon the book that Lady Helen had read aloud the only time I had been with them in the garden. I could not resist my wish to take it up, and to see what that pretty love-story in the unknown tongue looked like. I had never asked Mr. Dallas to tell me about it, after all. I looked first to see whose name was written on the fly-leaf ; it was Lady Doris's. As I held the book a heavy sheet of paper fell to the floor. I picked it up. It was a pen-and-ink drawing of two figures, a man and a woman, in a curious dress, such as I had never seen before. They were bending over a roadside well, which was fed by a trickling spring from the rock behind. The figures were so placed that the reflected faces could be seen in the broad basin of the fountain. They were both looking downwards, apparently at each other's image in the water. The woman's face was that of Lady Doris ; the man's, Mr. Dallas's own. Underneath was written some words in a small, twisted handwriting, which I could not read, and then, "To my own Doris, in memory of May 30th. G. M. D." It was Mr. Dallas's writing. I held the sketch for a moment in my hand, while my brain reeled and my heart felt like a wild thing inside me. The 30th of May ! That was the day I had rushed from the garden, while Mr. Dallas was speaking softly to Lady Doris. I took the paper by the top edge and tore it first through the middle, and then into a hundred fragments, which I scattered on the floor. Then, almost before I knew where I was, or what I had done, I found myself running along the meadows towards

Mardon. I could not collect my thoughts ; I felt that I should be disgraced for ever in the eyes of Mr. Dallas, but it seemed to me as if nothing mattered any more. Since all my love and all my misery were my own burden and secret, since all my life came before me as spoilt, why should I care what anyone thought of me ? I was a poor, lonely, ungainly girl, and I should never be anything else but a lonely, unhappy woman. I hoped I should die very soon, and I would send a message to Mr. Dallas when I was dying to ask him to come to me, and he would come, and I should tell him how my heart was broken, and he would pity me. And as I drew this picture, into my own mind came a great pity for myself, a great dread of the blankness and emptiness of the everyday life that lay before me. It was more a kind of instinct than anything else that led me straight to my garden when I got home. I was not looking for Mr. Dallas, but when I saw him there smoking under the apple-tree, I felt as if I had come to find him, and tell him what I had done to his sketch. It seemed as if I had only that very moment scattered the torn fragments on the brown carpet. He threw his cigar away when he saw me, and came towards me, saying :

"You haven't brought me an answer to my note, I know, for my friends came here just after you left. I'm sorry I gave you the trouble. I hope——" but there he stopped short. "Nancy," he said, "is anything amiss ? Are you ill ? The long walk in the heat has been too much for you ; take your hat off and come and sit down."

He took my hand to lead me to the seat, but I drew it away, resisting him, as I said, in an agony of courage and despair :

"Mr. Dallas, I want to tell you something I've done that'll make you think very badly of me. You'll never care to be kind to me any more when I have told you."

"No, no," he said gently, but looking greatly surprised ; "not so bad as that. But you're over excited ; don't tell me anything now, wait until after supper—wait till to-morrow."

"No, I can't wait," I cried ; "I can't ; don't stop me. I must tell you. Oh, I cannot—I cannot !" I sobbed, and the tears poured down my cheeks, and dropped on my dress and hands, and on to the ground.

"Poor child, poor child !" he said soothingly, drawing me to him as he

gently wiped my tears; "don't try to tell me anything, and don't cry so; you'll be ill after it."

The touch of his hands and the sound of his voice helped me. I made a great effort to speak steadily, and with both my hands in his, I said:

"I opened one of Lady Doris's books while I was waiting in her room to-day, and I found a picture you had made of yourself and her, and I——" Then my voice once more gave way, and again I felt the tears dropping quickly down my burning cheeks. I dared not look at him, but to judge from his voice he was smiling as he said:

"That was inquisitive, but it was not unpardonable. Lady Doris will readily forgive you for that."

Again I made an extreme effort to speak.

"And I took the drawing," I faltered, "and tore it all up."

"Oh, Nancy!" he exclaimed, and his voice was very grave this time, "whatever made you do that? I shouldn't have thought you——"

But I stopped him, clinging to his hands, and crying:

"Don't, don't, Mr. Dallas—don't say what you think of me! I am so miserable. I wish I was dead!"

"Hush, hush, Nancy!" he said; "calm yourself, and come into the house. I am not angry with you."

But I could not calm myself, though I suffered him to lead me as far as the courtyard. My whole frame was shaking with hysterical sobs, over which I had no control.

"Nancy," he said, stopping and speaking very gently and tenderly, "I am so sorry this has happened, but as I can easily make Lady Doris another drawing, and explain the matter to her for you if you will let me, you need not make such a great trouble of it."

His kind, soft voice, and the gentleness of what he said, seemed to rouse my excitement still more. All my pent-up misery seemed to come to my lips at once, and I cried, while my voice sounded faint and far off in my own ears as the voice of some other person in distress whom I pitied but could not help:

"Ah, you do not know how great my trouble is; you do not know what is in my heart. You love her, and she is beautiful, and clever, and worthy of you in every way, and she loves you in return, and you are both happy; but I love you a thousand times more than she

does—she could not love you as I do; no one could!"

"Nancy, Nancy!" cried Mr. Dallas, vainly trying to draw me towards the gateway; "you don't know what you are saying—you are talking wildly."

"Oh yes, yes; I know what I am saying. How can Lady Doris love you as I do? She has everything beautiful about her. She has many friends. But you can't guess what you are to a poor girl like me, all alone here, with no one to care about me. No one will ever love you as I do—it is impossible!"

Then I felt the ground rising and sinking under my feet, the tower of the gateway bent forward and seemed to crush me; I had a sensation of floating through the air, and when I came to myself I was lying on my bed, with Aunt Libby bending over me; she was putting something into my mouth from a teaspoon, which choked me as it ran down my throat before I was sufficiently collected to swallow it.

"That's right, my dear," she said, as I opened my eyes. "You'll soon be better now; your long walk has been too much for you. I'm so sorry, and it was on my errand too. Lie still; you mustn't come down again to-night."

I didn't want to, and as I closed my eyes I seemed to float away again.

Late the next morning, when I woke from a heavy sleep into which I had fallen after hours of restless tossing, Aunt Libby was still beside my bed. I woke with a terrible sense of trouble upon me, and in a second I remembered all. I lay for some minutes without speaking. I felt as if I could not face life again after what had happened. At last I said:

"You haven't watched by me all night, have you, Aunt Libby?"

"No," she said, in a sort of whisper, as if she was speaking to some one who had been very ill; "I slept in the big chair, and I have been down this morning to see after things, as you were so sound asleep." She got up to draw back the curtains, saying: "It's a beautiful morning again."

"Oh, don't let in the light," I cried; "my head's so bad."

"Is it?" she said; "that's a bad job; but you can lie where you are if you aren't well, and if any one comes to see the Old House, I'll take them myself."

This was a wonderful concession from Aunt Libby. Lying in bed at Mardon Farm was only considered necessary in

extreme cases, and, as to her taking visitors through the house, that was unheard of.

"Thank you, Aunt Libby," I said; "but won't you have too much to do? How about Mr. Dallas?"

Even if the room had been filled with broad daylight, Aunt Libby would not have supposed that I asked about Mr. Dallas except with reference to dusting his rooms and seeing to his dinner.

"I was just going to tell you," she said. "Mr. Dallas is gone."

"Gone!" I exclaimed. "Gone! How and why?"

Could it be possible that he had told them all? But, no, I could not think of that. Aunt Libby's answer reassured me.

"Just after the postman had come this morning, he said he must go at once, back to London. He told me to tell you from him that he was very sorry not to be able to say good-bye to you himself, but I was to say it for him, and that he hoped you would soon be well again."

"Did he say nothing else?" I asked; "nothing about my—about his bringing me in last night?"

"No—nothing. Why, what should he have said? He couldn't have done less, and he's too kind to think twice about it. He has given me a most beautiful Norwich shawl, and your father a briar-wood pipe, and he's left a book for you with your name in it—he said for us all to remember him by; but I told him I didn't think we stood in need of anything to remember him by. We shall never forget Mr. Dallas, shall we, Nancy?"

"No," I said, with a feeling that the world was all empty around me now. "No, I shall never forget Mr. Dallas."

And I never have forgotten him, though I never saw him or heard from him again after he left Mardon. The intensity of my love for him and the bitter shame and remorse that followed that terrible evening, were the beginning and end of the one romance of my life.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

CHAPTER V.

"It is an odd thing, but I can't get it out of my mind that your father and the man I knew as Samuel Elliott were one and the same man. Why, it is the most speaking likeness I ever saw in my life. When I came into the room that first day, it struck me dumb. But Miss Dunscombe, in that high and mighty way of hers—no

offence to you, my good sir—she put it so completely on one side, that I did not venture a second remark upon it. But I never look at it, I assure you—I never look at it without a conviction that the man who sat for that portrait was the man I knew—and, what is more, if you will allow me to say so, you are that man's son. It is in your walk—it is in the turn of your head—why, it is in your very way of sitting listening to me now. I tell you I knew your father better than I know you—but it was not as Mr. Ellerton, of West Saxford, I knew him, but as Mr. Elliot, of Cecil Street."

A little, red-faced, elderly man, with a head of bristly grey hair, stood in the diminutive dining-room at Fair Oak, gesticulating with great animation opposite the portrait of Stephen Ellerton, the elder. He was Miss Dunscombe's tenant, and had occupied that position rather more than a fortnight, during which time he had seen as little as politeness would permit of her nephew. On this particular Saturday, however, he had insisted upon Steenie's dining with him, and now, his wife having left the table, he had set himself vigorously to work to imbue the young man with his own belief in his father's two-fold identity. The latter listened politely, but without being convinced.

"What did you know of this Mr. Elliott?" he asked. "To begin with, it must be more than twenty years since you set eyes on him—that is to say, if there be anything in your hypothesis!"

"I knew a good deal of him in one sense, and nothing at all in another," was the reply. "He came to us—to my brother and myself—in our business capacity, with money to invest. Where he came from and who he was was no concern of ours. He was satisfactory, inasmuch as he had the money and meant business; but he was unsatisfactory, inasmuch as he would ask your advice, and run straightway in the teeth of it. He would sell out when he ought to have held fast, and stick like grim death to a thing he ought never to have touched. If ever a man wasted his substance, he wasted his. At last one day he 'came a cropper' over some railway stock he had gone in for in his wholesale style. It sobered him. Well it might. It was a small fortune, and he gave orders to sell out all round—everything. It would not have been the wisest thing to do in most cases, but I honestly thought in his it might be, and I took his instructions. He

was to come again a day or two after for the money, and he did come; but he only got part of it. He was to come again the week after, but he never did come again. We made enquiries in Cecil Street, and found it was simply an address for letters, and that not one in six months was either received or applied for, from which I am inclined to think it was only in connection with his speculations that any secrecy was designed or employed; and we also made enquiries at the bank, where the cheque—a large one—had been cashed, we found, the same day. From that day to this we have neither seen nor heard anything of Mr. Samuel Elliott."

"It was odd enough," said Steenie, who had changed countenance as he listened. "And you think it was about the time?"

"Of your poor father's murder? Yes, Mr. Ellerton, I do. I could not be sure of the precise date of the transaction until I looked back, and it has cost me some little time and trouble to arrive at, but I have arrived at it. I said good-bye to Mr. Elliott for the last time, on the morning of the 20th of November, 1860."

"You mean that?" the young man cried, springing from his chair, and confronting his companion in great excitement. "You are quite sure of it? On the evening of that day, my father was found murdered."

"Did not I tell you so?" the other returned with a little irrepressible triumph. "Only your good aunt was so obstinate, she would not listen to me. Now, calm yourself. If, as I believe, we have made one discovery, is it not a possible thing we may make more? If we have—as I believe—cleared up the mystery of Elliott's disappearance, may we not find a clue to that of Ellerton's murder?"

"It looks amazingly like it," Steenie allowed—adding, the next moment, his lifelong legal training in caution and reserve asserting itself; "and yet, it might be nothing but a coincidence."

"Nothing but a coincidence!" the stockbroker echoed scornfully. "Is your father, staring me in the face there, the image of the man I knew, or is he not? Did your father get rid of his money in some way unknown to his friends, or did he not? Was anybody able to prove where he was, or what he was about, the greater part of the last day of his life, or not? I tell you I have been over the whole ground. When once a thing takes hold of me I don't find it so easy to shake it off; and I've heard all there is to say, and

read all there is to read about the whole business, and I have put two and two together, till, it seems to me, the whole thing fits into a nutshell."

"And supposing you are right?" said Steenie. "Supposing my poor father did, for some purpose of his own, carry on certain transactions under a feigned name—which does not appear, from all I have ever heard of him, very likely—supposing all that, what good is the discovery to anybody now?"

"It proves that he was better worth the robbing than anybody supposed," the other replied with some contempt. "Call yourself a lawyer! I'd have made a better lawyer than you, my lad! Do you call it nothing in a case of this kind to find a motive?"

"It was always understood there was a motive. The mere finding of the pocket-book——"

"Oh, bother the pocket-book! For all anybody could tell, the emptying of it might have been nothing but a blind. The idea was that your father had very little about him. It was not his habit to carry money about him."

"Then you think," Steenie began slowly, and as if trying to impress a new idea upon his own mind; "you think that the murder must have been committed by somebody who was somehow in the secret? At that rate, the thing would be to discover who was, or was likely to have been. I am afraid after all these years, and considering how well it has been kept—so well, that even now it has yet to be proved that ever there was one—there is but a poor chance of anything of the kind. I am afraid you will think me apathetic," he added, flushing, "but I don't see my way, or what good is to be done by re-opening the whole miserable question."

The older man looked him up and down at these words, with a curious expression.

"Well," he said at length, "I don't understand you or any of your generation—blest if I do! You care about nothing, and concern yourselves about nothing, and I'm sorry for you. I would not exchange temperaments with you if, to do it, I could exchange my grey hairs for your youth. Why, if any villain had robbed me of my father, I should never have rested until I had unearthed him!"

"Even if he had had twenty years' start of you?" Ellerton observed dryly. "You forget that!"

"I'd have dragged him out of his

grave!" was the reply; but there was no working Steenie up to the pitch required of him, and the stockbroker abandoned the attempt in disgust. He was an active-minded, impulsive little man, whose time, since he had retired into private life, hung somewhat heavy on his hands, and who would have liked nothing better than to apply himself to the unravelling of the mystery, to which he thought he had found a clue; but if the son of the murdered man declined to enter into it, why should he? It was no duty incumbent upon him to hunt any man down to the death!

One thing was certain: Steenie had as much upon his hands, as the year advanced, as he had time or experience for.

Mr. Bevan became suddenly much worse, and quite unable even to consult with or direct his junior partner. Fortunately for the latter, there was in the office one older head than his own, and the head-clerk was a wise man, and had been content to bide his time, and keep friends with the young man who had been put above him. So the business got on fairly well without the principal; but at home there was terrible trouble, and strange reports began to get wind in the town.

"What is it they are saying about Mr. Bevan?" his aunt wrote to Steenie. "I had the most unsatisfactory letter, brimful of hints and innuendoes, from Fanny Stracey this morning, and I want to know the truth."

"Nobody knows it," the young man wrote back laconically, "that is to say, nobody out of the house. I saw Nellie yesterday. She says her father is very weak, and has bad nights. Mrs. Joliffe is worn out nursing him, but will not hear of having anybody in, or of allowing Nellie to sit up. The worry is doing her harm as it is; she does not look like the same girl. It is to be hoped for all their sakes the poor governor will get better or worse, before long. There are things I ought to see him about, but I cannot get at him, though Margetts told me himself the other day, he had given no orders to the contrary."

"I don't think anything of that," Miss Dunscombe remarked upon this last passage; "Margetts is as poor a creature as ever deluded people into thinking that he knew how to doctor them."

Nevertheless, in this case, Margetts was right, and his patient could have received Steenie perfectly well, had he chosen. In the last days of June there came to the

latter the summons for which he was waiting.

"Papa has come home," wrote Mary Hamilton, "and you must come up and see him—that is, if you still think it is worth while. I have got him to agree to this, but it is only fair to tell you it has not been easy even to do so much, and I am afraid there is nothing to look forward to but disappointment. You must please yourself, therefore, about coming, but I should like you to see papa, if it be only this once."

There was a hopeless, resigned sound about this, which impressed him more coming from the girl who had shown herself so bright, and resolute, and full of confidence, than it would have done had he seen less of these characteristics in her, and he went up to town in anything but an enviable state of mind. Nor did his reception at The Cedars tend to raise his spirits. He was shown into the pretty drawing-room in which Mary had presented him to Mrs. Lindsay, and here he found father and daughter awaiting him together. About most meetings, after a long separation, there is perhaps a certain sense of shortcoming. There was a depth of tenderness in the farewell, which had its origin in the sense of loss, and which must ever be wanting to that of recovery. And in this case outward circumstances strengthened the contrast. There had been no third person present at their parting, and now there was one who was to Steenie personally a perfect stranger. This in itself would have dismayed him somewhat, even had Mary been more like herself; but he had never seen her as she was to-day—pale, and nervous, and subdued—clinging, as it appeared to him, in a quite unusual and incomprehensible way, to her father. It was not the attitude he should have supposed natural to her, nor was it—so far he was right; but long before the interview came to an end he understood it, and knew how in her mind she stood, as it were, defending her father against his aunt—if need should be, against him!

He had not been sent for by these two either to be accepted in defiance of Miss Dunscombe's wishes, or to be sent about his business upon any pretence whatever.

"I have never yet been ashamed to give my reason for anything I have done," the Colonel had said quietly; "and I am not going to begin now."

Acting upon this, he had already told Mary of that painful passage in his life, in which Margaret Dunscombe had played so

prominent a part, and he now repeated the narrative to her nephew.

"I was very much in love with her," he said, "and to the best of my belief she loved me, and meant to marry me. But your father and mother were dead against it. Your mother could not bear the idea of parting with her, and your father had been prejudiced against me, and told me plainly I was not good enough for her, and that if she took me it would be in opposition to both their wishes. The last time I ever saw him we came to high words on the subject, and when I met Margaret almost immediately afterwards, she aggravated my exasperation by her coolness, and I talked a good deal of nonsense, which unhappily made more impression upon her than it appeared to do at the time. Directly I heard what had happened at Hazeldean, I went to see her and find out in what way I could be of use to them," he added, and then he detailed to Steenie the reception he had met with. "How the glove came to be where it was found is a mystery to me to this day," he observed finally. "That my glove it was I have no manner of doubt, but how it got there I have never been able to imagine. I might have dropped it myself the day before had I taken that path through the shrubberies, but I never went that way, so the only natural hypothesis I could think of fell through at once."

Mary sat listening, her eyes fixed intently on Steenie's face. He must know, she thought, that her father could never have told the story had there been a spark of truth in the charge brought against him. Besides, who could look at him—at his noble, beautiful face, and grand, soldierly bearing, and doubt him?

She spoke now, for the first time.

"Is it quite out of the question," she suggested, "that you might have dropped it somewhere else—somewhere where Mr. Ellerton may have picked it up by mistake for his own?"

"I thought of that, too, at the time," the Colonel replied. "But the one theory would not hold water any better than the other. I remember the mending of the glove well enough, and could have sworn to the day and the hour, and Stephen Ellerton and I never met again afterwards. There was but one clear day between it and the night of the murder, and that day

I happened to spend miles away from West Saxford. On the day of the murder itself, it was proved," he added, looking at Steenie, "that your father left for London in the morning, and returned, as he had gone, by rail, in the afternoon, and he was never seen alive afterwards, excepting at the club and on his way there—and I had not been within the club doors for a week or more. No! I have tried to puzzle it out, often and often, but I have never got any farther."

The conversation did not stop there, though the conjectures did. Colonel Hamilton was very explicit with Steenie. It was a hard thing, he acknowledged, that the happiness of any two people should be sacrificed to a delusion such as Miss Dunscombe's, but there was no help for it. Steenie must see for himself that, so long as it existed, it raised an insuperable barrier between Mary and himself. The only hope that was left to them was the forlorn hope that the mystery of Stephen Ellerton's death might yet be elucidated.

"And how much likelihood there is of that," he added a little grimly, "you are better able to judge than I."

The young man's heart leapt up within him, as he suddenly bethought himself of his conversation with the stockbroker. He remembered remorsefully that he had thrown cold water enough upon the fire of his zeal the other day to quench it for ever; but he doubted not he could rekindle it. The Colonel and Mary Hamilton listened with interest and intelligence.

"If I were in your place," the former observed, when Steenie concluded, "I should see more of this Mr. Burroughes, and I should give him to understand that I had mistaken my own feelings upon the subject, and should be thankful for his co-operation. I am not sure, were it my own case, I should not go farther, and with the new light that has been thrown upon your father's habits and transactions, see what they could do for you in Scotland Yard."

"You think it so important?"

"I do," Colonel Hamilton returned quietly. "It seems to me as if, having got so far, one ought to be able to go farther; but I have no wish to impose my opinion upon you. The only thing is—if your heart is really set upon winning this girl," and as he spoke, he drew Mary to his side, "you know the conditions."

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXXIII. DIAMOND-DIGGING.

THIS was the only little cloud, except clouds of dust and clouds of flies, which troubled Theo's happiness at that time. These, with Gerald, were to be preferred to the clearest and purest atmosphere without him. This nonsensical remark was gravely made to him by his wife, not long after they came to Kimberley. Gerald laughed, and made some affectionate answer; but these outward discomforts plagued him more than her. He did not mind the people much, or the moral feeling of the place; but he did mind the dust and the flies. However, he said nothing about going back to England, and Theo did not breathe a wish on that subject. He shrank from the thought of her relations, and he knew that either paying work or paying speculation would be more out of his way there than here. Of course he saw that, as an unmarried man, he could have got on here as well as many other young fellows; the first horror of the place had said that he could not, but now, on further acquaintance, he began to perceive that he could; and he had moments of sincere repentance for bringing Theo here—if not, as Mrs. Lee said, to make a fortune for her. But Theo was so brave, and happy, and patient; he knew that in her dear romantic mind she really meant that silly speech about the dust and the flies. When he came in anxious and desponding—for his spirits were variable—one look into her sweet face was enough to bring hope and courage back again; and every day she seemed to be a little happier, a little more contented, as

There were no more small bursts of haughtiness about the people at the Fields, who did not, in fact, trouble her much; her own looks and manners protected her, unconsciously to herself; and after that first visit she could smile good-humouredly at Mrs. Lee. In the next house to theirs, separated from them by a rather melancholy row of blue gum-trees, a digger's wife was slowly recovering from fever. She was a gentle, sad woman, with a good deal of refinement, and Theo spent many hours with her. The poor thing's one longing wish was to go back to England, and not to let her children grow up where they were, wild little Africanders. Theo often carried them off to her own house, and played with them there, for the sake of giving their mother an hour's peace; but she had a great tenderness for children, and a great influence over them. After two or three weeks, the next-door neighbour and her family went away to Barkly for change of air, and then Theo's chief sympathies were called out by a Kafir woman with a sick baby, who used to sit nursing it at the door of her hut, wrapped in a scarlet blanket. The tiny dark face grew yellower and smaller, and more pinched and ghastly, and Theo watched it with a sort of superstition, till one day it was gone, and its poor mother crept out alone from the hut, and looked up at the sun, and round at the desolate camp, and wandered along moaning like an animal in pain till she came to Theo's door, where she crouched down on the ground, and Theo brought her food and tried to comfort her.

Another friend that Theo made at this time was a dog, a funny red beast, the colour of his native dust. The old banker, Gerald's first friend, gave him to her, and

fully. Wool would have looked scornfully upon such a rival as Toby, whose only external beauty was in his honest, loving eyes.

The only people at the Fields with whom Theo and Gerald were really likely to make friends, if they came across them, were a few young Englishmen among the diamond-diggers, who had left civilisation behind and had come out here: some under various kinds of clouds, some only for adventure and fortune. These young men lived here and there at Kimberley, often two or three of them together, dressed in the wildest garments, and spent their time in hunting when they were not sorting diamonds. Gerald did not make friends with any of them at once, for circumstances had made him shy and reserved; he had not the common interest of diamonds, and Englishmen are much the same in their manners everywhere; but he knew several of them slightly, and Theo began to know them by sight, as they walked about the town, and used to say to him sometimes: "There goes a gentleman."

One day he and she had walked up to the edge of the great mine, and were standing there, looking at the work going on. It was a curious sight, and has often been described before, but this was what Theo saw. She looked down into a hole in the earth, like an immense bowl, with steep sides, more than two hundred feet deep, and an extent of some acres. The floor of this was all uneven, dark blue soil, divided into great irregular blocks, like rocks in an old crater. Each of these blocks was a "claim," belonging to a separate man or company, and about each of them a number of Kafirs were working, thousands of small black figures altogether, looking tiny in this immense place, half hidden among the platforms, and terraces, and ditches, and the strange shadows of the mine. They were all at work, though lazily, all these little figures; and the air, as one looked down at them, was full of vibrating wires, making a faint, sharp music as hundreds of buckets came up along them, full of blue soil, wound up by many windlasses, and running down again empty to be filled with soil once more. There was a strange medley of colours in the sides of the mine—red, yellow, blue, all running into each other; the sun was low, so that one side all glowed with the deepest hues, while black, sharp shadows lay across the other.

It was while Theo and Gerald were

looking down on this, standing a little apart from the windlasses, and the buckets, and the Kafirs busy with carts, taking away the stuff to be dried, and washed, and sorted, with a rough-looking white man here and there directing their operations; while he was telling her all he knew about it, and speaking, perhaps, a little enthusiastically—for the whole thing had a strong attraction for him—while they were absorbed in the picture before them, a young man, who had just come out of the mine, stopped and looked at them curiously.

"More picturesque than our old mines, isn't it?" said Gerald.

"Yes, but I like our old mines best," said Theo. "Last year, at Woodcote, I thought they were so very interesting."

Gerald looked at her, smiling, and she laughed and coloured a little.

"Don't be presumptuous," she said in a low voice. "Why should I have been thinking of you? I mean it. I think there is something fine in our men going down into the darkness and the dangers, risking their lives every day that all the houses may be warmed. They want some courage; they and their work are much more romantic really than Kafirs and diamonds, if you think of it seriously."

"Well, all this is more romantic on the surface, at any rate!" said Gerald.

"Ah, but what is romance!" said Theo.

She was looking happy and exalted as she spoke; her eyes, dark and soft, her face with a faint pink flush under her white, shady hat, were lovely and full of expression.

The young man from the mine, who had been lingering near them with furtive glances, now approached so close to them that Gerald turned round and looked at him.

He was roughly dressed, and in his shirt-sleeves, with a slouched hat on his head. He was short, with a light, active figure; looking as if he could walk, and ride, and play games. His skin was tanned dark brown, and the hair on his head was colour, but his beard was a light tawny colour; the sun had bleached it. He had bright, pleasant grey eyes, and was about Gerald's age. There still lingered about him something of the air of an Eton boy, good-humoured, polite, idle, and charming.

"I think you have forgotten me," he said to Gerald, and he took off his hat to Theo with a deprecating smile. "No

wonder, but this opportunity is too good to be lost."

"Why, you are Bob Stirling!" said Gerald, seizing his hand. "He was in the regiment," turning eagerly to Theo. "Bob, this is my wife."

"I supposed so," said Bob, "since I have been lying in wait here three long minutes. Are you making a tour in Africa?" he asked as he shook hands with Theo, who smiled on him brightly. "Is Mr. Fane going to write a book about us? I wish somebody would."

"Oh no; we are living here," said Theo.

"What on earth——" began Mr. Stirling, and he stared at Gerald and was silent.

Bob Stirling was by nature curious and talkative, but he asked no more questions then. He did not even say much about having unaccountably lost sight of Gerald after he left the army; he only said one or two nice things about their old friendship, and told him he was not changed in the least.

"I can't say that to you," said Gerald. "I may have passed you in the street fifty times—most likely I have, for I came here in June."

"I should not have passed you," said Bob. "You are wonderfully well preserved, but now you will let him grow his beard, Mrs. Fane, and then it will be all up with his good looks, and the old associations."

"Oh no, never," said Theo.

"How is it, then, that we have not met before?" said Gerald.

"I went down to Cape Town in June, and came back in August, and had the fever, and have been on the Vaal River ever since, picking up again. I only came home two days ago. You and Mrs. Fane have not had the fever? A pleasure to come."

He went on to tell them very frankly all his concerns. He had left the army two years ago, being one of a large family, and finding his pay an empty delusion: he had come out here with two of his friends—Slater and Cumming.

"You remember Slater—fat boy—he's thin enough now, poor beggar! awfully cadaverous, always having fever. He's got it now."

They had been working hard, and on the whole had had wonderfully good luck.

"In another year I shall be rich enough to go home, and stay there," said Mr. Stirling.

"Don't you think it will be very funny to live in England again?" said Theo.

"Yes, but on the whole I shall like it. I'm not naturally savage, in spite of my appearance, which I never felt ashamed of till now."

After a little more talk, Mr. Stirling remarked that it was sorting-time, and asked Theo if she would come and sort for him.

"You will bring me luck, Mrs. Fane, I know," he said.

So they walked across with him to his ground near the mine, where his partner, Mr. Cumming, a dark, silent man, was already sitting at a table, with Kafirs and buckets in attendance, and heaps of waste blue soil in the background. The Kafirs rolled their wild eyes on Theo and Gerald as they came up. Mr. Cumming moved away from the table, rather terrified at the sight of a lady; he was not such a sociable character as his friend Bob, and he had no former acquaintance with Gerald Fane.

"Now, Mrs. Fane, sit here, please," said Bob, and Theo took her place on a rough stool behind the table.

It was a strange scene; the great sky that blazed with evening light, the groups of black, degraded-looking figures standing round, the dryness, the desolation of red sand and blue crumbling soil, without a tree or blade of grass to be seen; the two young diggers, with shirt-sleeves turned up on arms as brown as their faces, Mr. Cumming talking to Gerald a yard or two away, and Mr. Stirling standing by Theo with laughing eyes, to preside over her first attempt at sorting.

A Kafir with a most repulsive face came forward with a large sieve of blue stuff, and poured it on the table before Mrs. Fane. Bob Stirling put a piece of slate into her hand, to shovel the stuff about with, and she began her sorting.

At first the stuff seemed full of sparkling things, over which she exclaimed, thinking that each of them was a diamond. Gerald now came up and looked over her shoulder with eager interest, though he had often helped at sorting before. The deceptive sparkles came from bits of spar, or from crystals, which were not at first so easily distinguished from diamonds, till Bob Stirling put them between his teeth; if they felt breakable they were worth nothing. In the end Theo's sorting produced about a dozen diamonds, and two of these were large, fine ones. The diggers were much pleased, saving it was the best

sort they had had for some time; they begged her to come and sort for them again as soon as she would, for a lady was always luckier than a man.

"Perhaps, if you will come, Mrs. Fane," said Mr. Cumming solemnly, "there may be a chance of Stirling attending to his business a little more. He's the idlest fellow; he leaves it all to me, and if I wasn't the soul of honesty, he would be ruined in no time."

"I must certainly come and look after his interests," said Theo, smiling. "He has been ill, so what could he do?"

"Have I really got a friend to stand up for me?" exclaimed Bob in a low voice.

He was perfectly happy with his new-found friends, and Cumming, who was lonely, looked rather enviously after him as he walked away with them.

Gerald and he were talking about old times, and Theo, listening to them, felt as if all this was a strange, incongruous dream. Both surely could not be real—civilized life in green, shady, cloudy England, where fields, and hedges, and gardens were, and all the thousand details (so unnecessary they seemed now) which took up every day; all that felt so far off now, that Theo felt as if she could never, possibly, see it all again.

They passed along by crowds of Kafirs just come out of the mine, with scarlet coats and black legs, shouting, screaming, dancing. By the wayside sat the coolies, with their baskets of fruit for sale; rough white men lounged by smoking, with their hands in their pockets, wearing large hats lined with green; all was noise and colour in the deep, glorious glow of sunset.

Bob Stirling came and spent that evening with Gerald and Theo, and many evenings afterwards; he was so friendly, so helpful and good-tempered, that they never found him a bore. He brought his friends to see them, and very soon they had no want of acquaintances; all the best of the young men in Kimberley came to their house, and worshipped Theo, and made friends with Gerald. Life was very happy. They went out riding on the veldt in the early morning, and by moonlight; the opinions of their neighbours did not trouble them, though it grew hotter every day. And, after all, Gerald did not seem foolish when he said again that the only good reason for living here was diamonds, and that he thought he must buy a claim, and try his luck like all these other fellows.

Theo smiled a little indifferently, and

said: "Well, as you like." She did not mind much; perhaps she was drifting into that lazy, languid, don't-care state of mind, which seems to be one of the two poles of life in South Africa.

MARY READ, THE PIRATE.

AMONG the authentic histories of pirates in the early part of the seventeenth century, none is as curious and interesting as that of the woman whose name is at the head of this paper, and there are facts in her remarkable career which, as they show her to have been far removed from ordinary malefactors of any time, seem to me worth recording. Under other circumstances, and with a different training, she might have been a Joan of Arc, a Marguerite d'Anjou, a Maid of Saragossa. The nobility and devotion of her character were scarcely less conspicuous than her extraordinary courage and contempt of danger, and I see no reason to doubt the truth of her repeated assertion that the life she had been led to adopt was not that of her choice.

Mary Read was born probably in the last years of the seventeenth century, as at the time of her trial in November, 1720, she was still a young woman. Her mother was married to a sailor, who went to sea soon afterwards, some time before the birth of a child—a boy. Its father is supposed to have been lost, or to have died at sea; at all events, he never returned to the young wife, whose conduct, however, soon showed her not to be inconsolable. She bore the character of a respectable woman in her neighbourhood, and, to save her reputation, finding, the year after the birth of her boy, that she was likely again to become a mother, she left London, saying she was going to live in the country with some friends. In the retreat which she found she was delivered of a girl, and about the same time the boy died. This chance circumstance led to the deception upon which the whole of Mary Read's career was based.

Mrs. Read, after a year or two, fell into straitened circumstances, and bethinking her that her mother-in-law was well off, and would provide for this child if she could palm it upon the old woman as her grandson, she dressed Mary as a boy, and brought her to London. The deception was perfectly successful. The supposed grandmother proposed to take the child, and

bring it up; but this, of course, would have led to detection, and Mrs. Read, declaring that it would break her heart to be separated from her boy, consented to live near at hand, receiving a crown weekly for his maintenance.

Things continued thus for a few years. Mary's sex was never suspected by the Read grandmother, and she was brought up in all respects as a boy. But when the old woman at length died, the allowance ceased, and Mary, being more than twelve years old, Mrs. Read conceived the idea of sending her out, as a page, to wait on a French lady. Probably the restraints and habits of servitude did not suit the roving tendencies of the young adventuress, for she does not seem to have remained in this position long, but to have entered herself on board a man-of-war, where she served before the mast some time. How it came about that she exchanged the sea for the land service we are not told, but we next hear of her in Flanders, where she carried arms, first in a regiment of foot, and then in the cavalry. The youthful trooper behaved so gallantly in several actions, that he won the admiration and esteem of his officers. His horse was better groomed, his accoutrements better kept, than any man's; he was what would be termed now "a very smart soldier," until, unhappily for her, the woman's heart, under its cuirass, betrayed her, and Mary fell in love.

The object of her attachment was a young Fleming, who was her comrade in arms, and who, though he occupied the same tent, was long before he suspected her sex. The rashness with which she exposed herself to danger wherever she was, to the length of rushing out to join any attacking-party, even when not commanded to do so, led her companion and many other troopers to believe that the mind of the young volunteer was unhinged, and it was not till the Fleming discovered her secret, that the motive of her conduct—so gratifying to his vanity—became apparent. But the modesty and reserve of the girl, when she had revealed herself, were, strange to relate, not less remarkable than her valour in the field. She loved the man passionately, but resisted all his temptations until he offered to make her his wife, then they exchanged vows, and remained fighting side by side as long as the campaign lasted. When they marched into winter quarters at Breda, Mary publicly proclaimed her sex, as-

sumed woman's clothes, and was married to her Fleming in presence of several officers and a great concourse of people, drawn together by the curious story, which excited much interest at the time. Everyone gave the bride a present as a contribution towards housekeeping, and, thus set up, they purchased their discharge, and opened an eating-house, or ordinary, at the sign of The Three Horse Shoes, near the castle, where they established a good trade under the patronage of several of the officers.

But poor Mary's happiness did not last long. Her husband died, and, in addition to her grief, circumstances conspired about the same time to reduce her to poverty. The peace was concluded; there was no longer a resort of officers at Breda; the widow, having little or no trade, was forced to give up her ordinary. Her substance was spent—what was she to do for a living? The old life was the only one that suggested itself to the young, vigorous woman, now left without ties and without funds. She again assumed man's apparel, and served for a time with a regiment in Holland, but as there was no chance of preferment in time of peace, she formed a resolution of seeking her fortunes in another way, and shipped herself on board a vessel bound for the West Indies. This vessel, on its outward passage, was captured by English pirates, who plundered the ship and let it go again, keeping Mary—her sex undivulged—a prisoner.

Here, no doubt, her mind became accustom'd, though her conscience was never really reconciled, to the idea of a lawless life. The King's proclamation came out shortly afterwards, offering pardon to all such pirates as should voluntarily surrender themselves by a certain day, and the crew by whom Mary had been captured, taking advantage of this, gave themselves up to the governor of the neighbouring island, where they lived peaceably upon their capital for a time. But Mary had no means of subsistence, and hearing that Captain Woods Rogers, the Governor of the Island of Providence, was fitting out some privateers to cruise against the Spaniards, she, with some others, embarked for that place, and offered their services to the governor.

We now come to the period of her life which it is most difficult to extenuate unless we accept in full her own repeated declaration that it was only on compulsion that she acted as she did. All that i

certainly known is, that the crews of some of these privateers, shortly after sailing, rose against their commanders, and returned to their old trade of piracy. Among those who took up arms was Mary Read, but it is quite possible to conceive that she had no choice in the matter. The mutiny of a whole shipful of cut-throats would have left a solitary man powerless to remonstrate or to contend against it. The evidence on her trial deposed that in all the actions which followed no one was more resolute, more ready to board, or undertake any hazardous adventure than Mary Read; but this is not absolutely inconsistent with the supposition that she had been driven to adopt a course of life against which her higher instinct rebelled. "That which thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might," seems to have been the ruling principle of this extraordinary woman's life. When the ship was attacked and taken, none kept the deck save Mary Read, and a certain Anne Bonny, of whom we shall speak presently, and one more, upon which Mary called to those below to come up and fight like men, and finding they did not stir, she fired down the hold upon them, killing one and wounding others. It is fair to mention that she declared this statement to be false, upon her oath, though she did not attempt to deny the main facts in the charges brought against her.

Anne Bonny was a woman of fierce and fiery nature, unredeemed by a spark of the nobility and self-devotion which lift Mary Read out of the ranks of unsexed tergiversants. Anne had eloped from her husband, in Providence, with Captain Rackam, the pirate, with whom she had gone to sea in man's clothes, and both these worthies were on board the same ship with Mary, who had now to encounter difficulties and troubles of a fresh kind. Anne Bonny fell violently in love with the handsome young sailor—Mary's sex was not so much as suspected by anyone on board—and Rackam's jealousy was roused by Anne to such a pitch that he declared he would cut her new lover's throat. It was not till Mary had confided her secret to Anne, who hastened, in turn, to appease her protector by revealing it to him, that peace was restored, and this strange episode of love at cross-purposes terminated.

And now comes the second and last romance in Mary's life. In their cruise they had captured a great number of ships belonging to Jamaica and other parts of

the West Indies, bound to and from England; and whenever they found on board any artist, or other ingenious person, who they conceived might be of service to them, if he was unwilling to join them, it was customary to keep him by force. Among the number was a young man "of most engaging behaviour," who seems by degrees to have won Mary's heart. He confessed frankly that he had a horror of piracy; she agreed with him in condemning it, declaring that she only desired an opportunity of quitting a course of life which was utterly distasteful to her. They became messmates, and when their friendship had ripened, she gradually suffered him to discover that the feeling on her side had developed into a yet warmer one, as from woman to man.

The youth's surprise can readily be imagined, and his incipient love was quickly fanned into a flame by an action of hers which showed of what stuff Mary was made. The history of true love has, perhaps, no more strange and touching incident to record.

Her lover, having had a quarrel with one of the pirates, and their ship then lying at anchor near one of the islands, it was arranged that they should go on shore in the morning and fight. Mary was a prey to anxiety and apprehension for her lover. She would not have him refuse the challenge, for to be branded as a coward was unendurable in her eyes. On the other hand, she knew the pirate to be a much better swordsman, and she dreaded the result of the encounter. In this strait, her feminine wit, aided by her masculine courage, befriended her. She was not afraid for her own life; so long as his was saved, no matter if her own were sacrificed. She contrived to pick a quarrel with the antagonist himself, challenged him, and insisted upon his meeting her on the sands two hours before the time appointed for the duel with her lover. There she fought him with the sword, and killed him on the spot.

They were bound to each other for ever after this, but the duration of this second tie was even shorter, in poor Mary's case, than the first. The pirates' vessel, under Rackam, was captured in November, 1726, by Captain Barnet, who brought her into Port Royal, in Jamaica, and a Court of Admiralty was held at St. Iago de la Vega, to try the culprits. It was shown, on evidence, that her husband

had been detained on board against his will, but Mary was, of course, imprisoned and tried. Her defence was ingenious and eloquent, but the evidence against her was strong, and it is possible that her execution would not have been resented, but for her condition. She pleaded that she was shortly to become a mother. She defied her accusers to show that she had ever been other than a virtuous, modest woman, faithful to her husband, and only as desirous as he was to lead an honest life. How it might have fared with her, had she not died in prison, it is impossible to say. Considerable sympathy was shown for her at the time, and the brief narrative of her career, published a few years later, proves that contemporaneous criticism was disposed to take a not unfavourable view of the character of this singular woman. That she was made for better things there can be no doubt; she was no ordinary adventuress. The qualities that distinguished her were such as are rare in man or woman, and though, in the conventional routine of modern life, such qualities would generally be useless, and difficult to adjust to the machinery of a woman's existence, we cannot but feel admiration for dauntless courage and devoted self-sacrifice wherever they are found. In the world's currency, this poor criminal was as a worthless coin; the image and superscription had been defaced. But the metal was sterling, for all that. Will not much which is readily accepted amongst us now, sharp-cut to touch, and burnished to sight, prove to be forged dross when tested in the Mint, hereafter?

THE AFTERGLOW.

THE August afterglow over the sea;
The great red sun has gone to his rest
By the mighty Head in the ocean's breast;
She sighed a sigh of utter content,
A sigh that in long, full, glittering heave,
Lifted her breast to the light of eve,
As his burning lip to her lip he bent
And sank in her arms like a bird to its nest;
And the warm love-light in his closing eyes,
Flushed the great blue seas, and the great blue
skies,

And left the roseate gleam to be,
The August afterglow over the sea.

The August afterglow over the sea;
From the south the light wind swept along,
As tender as hope, and as soft as song,
Crisping the surface sheen of the wave,
Till it rippled and laughed in shine and shade,
As the gleam or the gloom across it played;
And a musical echo back it gave,
From its depths the brown seaweeds among,
That swayed and tossed at the foot of the Head
That an hour ago shone dusky red,
As it watched in its rugged majesty,
The August afterglow over the sea.

OUR SHINING RIVER.

IX.

THE days we passed at Goring are, for some of us, to be marked with the whitest of chalk. Not only was the place itself charming, the weather magnificent, and the air brisk and bracing, more like that of a mountain region than of a river valley; but there was as well for me the sweet companionship of a fresh and guileless nature, warmed by the first glow of passion, which had never till now been awakened. Mr. Pycroft was, I think, on my side from the first. After what had passed, he told his wife that he would never entrust his daughter to Charlwood's keeping. Whatever might happen to him personally, he had set his foot down upon that. And Boothby, too, recalled to join his womankind at Oxford, and continue their tour on wheels—Boothby patted me encouragingly on the back, and bade me "go in and win." He was a little nervous about the trust-money, but he was not going to see his little ward made miserable—no, not if he had to hang down the whole of the missing sum. Not that he expected to have to do it, he added hastily; for, of course, he had his own girls to think about. But Mrs. Pycroft still held out, and clung to her old plans.

And Charlwood was nowhere to be found. Old Thomas knew nothing about him, evidently. The young Albert came to church on the following morning, evidently to see what we were about. And he was charged with a message of abject apology from his father for his behaviour of the night before—an apology which Mrs. Pycroft received graciously enough.

Mr. Pycroft had been exploring the region of chalk-downs beyond Streatley, whose ranges stretch, without a break, through a thinly-populated region to the verge of Salisbury Plain, and following the course of the old British trackway, which may still be traced along the ridges of the downs that overlook the vale of the White Horse. He was mildly interested, too, in the discovery that Goring once bore the name of Little Nottingham, perhaps from a settlement of stocking-weavers here; of whom, however, there remains no trace, unless in the sign of our inn, The Miller of Mansfield, which suggests rather traditions of Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest, than of the outlaws of the Chilterna. The twin villages, too, separated by a hostile tariff, the penny-toll for foot-passengers, which is

exacted both coming and going, and which forms a potent barrier between the two communities, excite a certain amount of speculation. Why should there be two villages, two churches, two parochial administrations in such close neighbourhood, of equal antiquity, and of rival importance? Other instances of these twin settlements occur along Thames side—Whitchurch and Pangbourne; a little lower down the river, Windsor and Eton; and, more familiar still, Putney and Fulham, with churches that seem to be on speaking terms; all of which suggest that the river was the boundary between different tribes of men, as well as of the administrative area of the counties.

Then there is the drive to Pangbourne, where the road winds its way up the hill, sometimes overshadowed by trees, and sometimes open to the ever-widening landscape, with the broad reaches of the river shining in tranquil beauty, while beyond rise the billowy, tufted hills of the Chilterns. And there is nothing much better of its kind than the descent into Pangbourne, with its terraced woods, its sunny, pleasant houses, its lock, its streams, its weirs, its broken waters swiftly rushing, or slowly eddying, under the wooded banks. And then we rumble over the old wooden bridge, and so back to Goring by a road which, making up the side of a hill, loses sight of the river, and takes us back to Goring by a less interesting route. For hereabouts, when you lose sight of the river, you miss the whole charm of the scene. It is the river that has made the scenery, and when the bold escarpments and terraced heights of its handiwork are left behind, everything becomes tame and insipid.

Nor shall we soon forget the long, pleasant days spent in some shady nook with rod and line, watching the light float as it saunters quietly along with its gentle, mysterious movements and quiverings, varied by a sudden pirouette as it encounters an eddy, or a quick, unexpected dive in artful simulation of a "bite," for what after all proves to be only a straggling branch of weed. Claudia brings her sketching-materials and makes blotchy studies of river and trees, and mademoiselle generally stops in the boat, well propped up with cushions, and working a little, and dozing a little, alternately.

In one of our fishing expeditions we encountered Rebecca and her brother, and presently joined our forces. Rebecca appeared so tranquil and contented that

it was evident she was satisfied as to the cause of Charwood's absence; and, indeed, in confidence to me she expressed herself as quite without alarm upon the subject. Rebecca was an excellent fisherwoman, and challenged Claudia, who had some pretensions that way herself, to a trial of skill, each to take a certain swim, and the result of two hours' fishing to decide the championship. "'Twas merry when you wader'd on your angling." And, indeed, the affair assumed quite a sporting aspect, although there was too much laughing and talking to give the fishing a fair chance. But Albert was very assiduous in providing bait for Claudia's hook, and I performed the same bottle-holding office for Rebecca.

Here was the opportunity for which Rebecca had, perhaps, angled, affording time for a little confidential talk upon the subject of Charwood and his prospects. Rebecca had recognised me as a friend—even if my friendship had not been quite disinterested.

"My pa has all kinds of schemes," she remarked, as her float went lightly down the stream. "But I don't agree with them. Charley has got to be something, or do something, and not to be hanging around on what my pa can give him. And Charley has got all the makings of a man about him, only he's spoilt with having all his own way. Now he won't have all his own way with me."

That was quite evident, and it promised well for the future happiness of the wedded pair—if ever they became so—that this should be the case. Rebecca having nodded assent to my appreciative remarks, thus pursued the subject:

"Now, what my pa is about, and I don't think he ought to, is what he calls to buy up Charley right out. I don't think he has much left, poor Charley, but it seems that he has a sort of off-chance for some property, if his cousin, Miss Pyecroft there, should die before she was twenty-one. There! I thought my bait was gone. Mr. Penrice, will you pick out the reddest and toughest of those red worms?"

When Rebecca's bait was properly adjusted and once more sent on its journey down the stream—she was fishing with a Nottingham reel, and a gossamer-like running line, and handled her rod like a past mistress of the craft—well, just as the light float had reached the end of the swim, something plucked it violently down, and next moment the light rod was

bent almost double with the rush of a big fish. Alas! the line had kinked, had broken—the fish was gone, and we looked blankly into each other's faces.

"There!" cried Rebecca, flinging down her rod in a passion of mortification, "if that girl beats me, I'll never forgive her!"

The loss of that fish indeed promised to be fatal to Rebecca's chances. The hubbub created in the water had, no doubt, frightened and put on its guard every fish in the swim, and by the conditions of the contest, the competitors were not allowed to change their stations.

"Well, we'll sit down till all's quiet," said Rebecca, "and then try our luck again."

And so we found a seat on an old gnarled alder, and went on talking. But Rebecca did not revert to the broken thread of her narrative. Perhaps the loss of her fish had made her feel less amiably disposed towards the Pyecrofts. At all events, she would talk of anything else—boating, fishing, and all kinds of things, winding up with discourse on sentiment and the affections. Rebecca had strong, racy ideas of her own, and she talked well, and listened sympathetically. Perhaps there was a touch of coquetry about her which did not render her manner less winning. Anyhow, we lost count of the time, and forgot all about the match—till suddenly Claudia and her companion appeared before us.

Claudia had caught a roach of about two ounces weight, and thus, as Rebecca had landed nothing, she became the winner of the prize. But she did not seem to take much pleasure in her triumph, although Albert was saying all kinds of fine things in praise of her skill, while Rebecca made fun of the small roach, and of everything that was said or done.

"I shall come up this evening, if I may," Albert had said, as we parted.

"I am sure mamma will be glad to see you," Claudia had graciously replied.

"He is terrible, that young man," said mademoiselle, who had heard these last words. Albert, it may be said, had never been ordinarily civil to mademoiselle, whom he regarded as "only the governess," and that lady in consequence detested him cordially. "I wonder that you should encourage him to come."

"He has been very kind and attentive," said Claudia curtly. And all the way home she was silent and irresponsive. But Claudia has not yet acquired the habit of keeping

up her wrath. She has still the childish instinct to "kiss and be friends," and to blame herself when there is any little falling out between us. And by-and-by it appeared, from certain wistful glances and the drooping of the corners of her sweet little mouth, that she wanted either to forgive or be forgiven—she was not quite sure which.

"I was a dreadful bear about that fishing business," I ventured to remark, when nobody was looking our way.

"You were odious," cried Claudia; "but why should I have been cross?" There was sweet reconciliation in her glance, and a soft cadence in her voice, as if to make amends for past unkindness, which indeed had been of the lightest possible texture.

But after dinner we were surprised by a visit from Mr. Thomas himself, accompanied by his son Albert, both being in full tenue, with gloves and button-holes, as if intending a quite official and diplomatic visit. Mr. Thomas had a long interview apart with the elder Pyecrofts, and at the end of it Mrs. Pyecroft came in some agitation to ask my advice. Mr. Thomas had proposed in due form a double alliance between the families.

"I had no idea he was so well off," said Mrs. Pyecroft, as if in extenuation of the man's audacity, "and he tells me that the greater part of his money was made in successful speculations. Of course that does not make any difference. And he would make fine settlements on Claudia. It would be humiliation in one generation, to be followed by increased importance in the next."

And the alternative? Mr. Thomas made no secret of his intentions, should his proposal be refused. He would have Mr. Pyecroft and his co-trustee pilloried in Chancery, and would bring ruin upon the family.

And what had Mrs. Pyecroft replied to all this? Well, she had temporised. She could do nothing till she had seen her nephew Charlwood, who was for the moment away from home. Mr. Thomas manoeuvred adroitly to find out what had become of Charlwood, but Mrs. Pyecroft was able to baffle his curiosity, as she did not know herself, and, in the end, a week's truce or respite had been agreed upon, and Mr. Thomas had departed, well-satisfied, it seemed, that a basis for negotiation had been laid down.

Many things may have happened before that period of time is over, and I feel sure

that, unless with Charlwood's connivance, Mr. Thomas is quite powerless to do any harm. And we are more than likely to come across Charlwood lower down the river. He is not far off, for it is pretty certain that he is in communication with Rebecca. Probably in disgust with Rebecca's relations, and ashamed of his conduct towards his own, he is sulking in one of his favourite retreats on the river, enjoying himself mightily all the while, as is his custom.

Somewhat reassured by these considerations, Mrs. Pycroft gives the signal for departure. Our boat is waiting by the steep little bank below the bridge, and we take leave of the pretty little village that has grown to feel quite home-like for us. At the moment we push off into the stream, the elder Pycrofts are thundering over the wooden bridge in their carriage; we shall meet at Wargrave this evening, and, in the meantime, we have the whole of a long, delightful day before us.

We glide gently down upon the placid stream, between pleasant wooded banks, and then under the wide, echoing arch of the Great Western Railway, and then by a bright, pleasant reach, with Basildon Park in the distance, till we come in sight of the wooded heights of Pangbourne. There is nothing to be seen of the Thomases' house-boat; it has left its moorings by the river-bank, and there is nothing to show its present address, either up or down the river.

At Pangbourne Lock we meet with something like a flotilla of small boats—a sort of Amazonian fleet—the crews being nearly all girls and women, clothed in cool cream-colour and white, with much colour in the way of many bright sunshades and gaily striped wraps. There are many dogs of the party, who bark at each other from the extreme point of the bows, and threaten to topple over in the eagerness to exchange salutations. We are now, indeed, at the very gates of the watery kingdom of Amazonia, a kingdom conventionally, although it owns no masculine ruler—a kind of watery domain, where women seem to have everything their own way. A pleasant, lotus-eating land, if land it can be called, which is mostly water—a land of sunny afternoons, where boats are paddled to and fro by fair, vestal crews, or are moored under the shadow of trees while their occupants read or dream away the long, lazy hours. Originally, perhaps, the Greek legend of the Amazons

had some such justification, derived, it is likely enough, from Arab sailors and merchants, who, coming upon sunny isles in the Indian seas, where women alone were in possession—the men being all away at sea for their season's fishing—brought home strange traveller's tales, embellished and transformed, of this community of women; and so, perhaps, our Amazonia on the Thames is not without its occasional masculine element. Anyhow, the charming inhabitants of this pleasant realm are not hostilely disposed to intruders of the other sex, nor can we attribute their comparative tameness to the fact that, like Selkirk's birds, they are so unaccustomed to man, for here and there we come upon a biped who has signs of incipient whiskers on his carefully shaven face, although such are reduced apparently to a condition of abject serfdom. But we come across girls in punts, fishing; others in birch-bark canoes, cruising about with the fearlessness of mermaids; there is a team of girls on the bank towing a boatload of their sisters up the stream.

Among this gentle company of joyous demoiselles there is a sudden alarm, as when some tall war-ship of the Greeks pushed its way among the light shallops of the Amazonian fleet. There sounds the crack of the whip on the bank, and along the tow-path under the trees, hardly to be traced among the bracken and long grass, paces a labouring horse, while swinging round the corner looms a heavy loaded barge, terrible brass-pot among these vessels of fragile porcelain.

"Don't you be frightened, ladies; I sha'n't touch you," cries the man at the helm to a boatful of girls, who are splashing confusedly towards the bank, but as the great heavy poop swings sullenly round, it seems touch and go with the occupants of that tiny bark.

This is about the last barge that is left in this part of the river, and its owner, perhaps, the last of the bargees, but polished and cultivated by contact with the high civilisation of Amazonia.

"Now, if you'll give me hold of your painter, I'll give you a tow down to Reading," cries the last of the bargees good-naturedly, as he passes us in a weedy piece, where a pole would be more effective than oars; and we are presently hooked on behind the barge, and gliding pleasantly along without trouble or exertion. Our ancient mariner knows the river well from Oxford to Mammernith, and even has

sailed the troubled waters of Bugsby Reach, and laid up in Barking Creek ; and thus brings into these quiet, sylvan shades a reminder of the sterner purposes which come upon the river as it glides and flows ; when you think of the long smoky reaches alive with barges and steamers, and the docks crowded with shipping, and the river mouth, where the tall, white-winged ships come and go with every tide.

And so we glide past Hardwicke, a solid old mansion, from whose windows the fated Charles Stuart may have thrown a melancholy glance on the shining river below ; and among the woods lower down, in shadowed seclusion, stands Mapledurham, the fine Elizabethan mansion of the Blounts, who have lived there time out of mind, and are best known to fame in the person of the gifted Martha, whom people know something about as the friend of Pope.

Just about here we found ourselves and our barge adrift for a while upon the stream, while our horse and coachman are quietly crossing the river on the ferry-boat, leaving the shaded path under the trees for a more open one along the borders of green meadows. The ferryman's dog sits in grief upon the high bank and howls after its master, till at last, emboldened by despair, it makes a desperate leap into the pool, and rises presently with a sob, to swim after the receding boat. And this is a ferryman who is a pluralist in his way, for he has another ferry lower down, and as soon as he has landed our horse, he pulls after us in a little skiff down the river, to ship our horse across as before. What happens when there is a foot-passenger who wants to cross at one ferry when the passenger is at another, is not quite evident. Perhaps the wayfarer is expected to carry a horn—there is an unrepealed law of Alfred's, surely, to that effect—and to blow it lustily on such an occasion.

But happy must be the ferryman who plies his calling in this secluded realm. Indeed the lot of ferrymen generally in this part of the river is to be envied, one would think, with their homely little cottages by the river-bank, and their battered old boats, that can have changed little in form since the days of the first ferryman, and their pleasant little jaunts across the water with all kinds of company. Red Riding Hood with her basket, and Signor Wolf with his cruel black moustache ; now a princess in disguise, and now an old woman with butter and eggs for the

market. Perhaps the huntsman crosses with his hounds, all in couples, and pulling this way and that, or the squire himself with his little bay cob, taking a short cut from the home-farm to the Leasowes.

And after all, there is more movement than you might think in the life of the barge-mariner. There is not much channel to spare in these narrow waters, and a barge aground would be a sight to excite the laughter of gods and men, and the old lady wants coaxing round the corners sometimes—the coaxing effected with a long cross-handed pole with a turn or two of rope round it ; and what with handling the pole and the tiller, and letting out the tow-rope here and hauling it in there, our ancient mariner has not much time to spare for connected conversation. And then he brings out his horn—he has not forgotten the laws of Alfred, it seems—and blows a potent blast to warn the lock-keeper. "I'm bound to go in first," asserts our mariner, "and these gay folks must come in after me." And our mild-mannered mariner is tenacious of the ancient privileges of his order ; and so we float into the pretty lock of Mapledurham, while a little fleet of cock-boats respectfully make way for us, and then we all sink down together into the cool shades, the big barge threatening a nip occasionally to one or the other, but balked of its purpose by a judiciously-applied head-rope.

And now Purley Church appears among the trees, with Purley Park in the immediate background, but whether the diversions of Purley were carried on here we can't exactly ascertain. But here, with a freer course, our mariner becomes more sociable. He makes a sudden dive into his cabin, and emerges with a steaming teapot.

"A cup of tea's always refreshing," he remarks. "Wiah I'd stuck to the teapot all my life."

There seems a certain charm, however, in the reminiscence that he hasn't stuck to it all his life. Perhaps the memories that please us most are not always of the teapot order. Anyhow, our friend produces quite a stock of teacups from a little locker, and invites us all to partake. That was a pleasant little tea-drinking under the woods of Tilehurst, where the capacious Roebuck looks down upon the stream, and the white curls of steam from the Great Western trains appear frequently among the trees.

And now the river-banks are studded with splashes of bright red—a forewarning

that we are approaching a military centre, for Tommy Atkins is taking his pleasure on the banks with his fishing-rod and a box of gentles, and a rosy-cheeked damsel or two to bear him company. We have left Amazonia behind us, and come out into a more commonplace world.

At Caversham Bridge we cast off from our friendly vessel, and drift gently to the landing-place, and here we have luncheon in a quite French-looking restaurant overlooking the river—a place that mademoiselle is charmed with, as she finds French-speaking people here. The river, too, reminds her of her beloved Seine; she feels that she is at Passy, or some other place of Parisian resort. The café noir, too, has the flavour of France, and the sugar, too, on the little pewter trays. Ah, it is too touching! Yes, it is her dear Seine that she is permitted to see once more.

A bronzed sailor, who has run up from the Albert Docks in a fierce-looking little black launch called The Firepump, remarks that it reminds him of the Hang-Ho in China—particulars quoted from memory. There are all kinds of launches here; indeed, we have passed into the regions of the steam-launch. Clusters of launches hang about the bridges, and lie moored in the river, while old, broken-down specimens lurk in the backwaters; and all along the river to Reading we find rather a townified aspect of things.

As for red Reading itself, it does not seem to belong to the Thames exactly, or to be in any way a riverside town. Reading belongs to the railways, and is spreading itself out over the fields at a rate that promises to make it ere long an intermediate metropolis. But, except for viaducts and gasworks, and a businesslike creek, which proves to be the mouth of the Kennet, there is nothing to show of all this upon the river, which only takes a subdued aspect of Wapping for a space, and then passes into green fields and pleasant woods once more.

Pleasantest of all these woods are the woods of Holme Park, with a shady walk along the riverside, which has received the rather Cockneyfied name of Thames Parade. After this, we are soon at Sonning, where the hay-carts are still at work—rather later than elsewhere—and we land to look at the church, with its charming chancel-arch. A pleasant little place is Sonning, with its gardens almost too painfully trim and neat. Even the lock itself is among the flower-

beds, and everybody has got something to say to the lock-keeper. "Well, Sadler, how are the bees getting on?" It is one of the penalties of celebrity to have the same things said to you over and over again by all kinds of people, and to have to frame answers that shall be distinguished by a certain amount of originality.

And below Sonning the river becomes for a while a trifle dull; luckily the northward bend of the river favours us with the south-westerly breeze, and hoisting an extempore leg-of-mutton sail after Robinson Crusoe's time-honoured pattern, we skim along merrily enough. And you have the advantage on the river that you seem to be going very fast when at only a moderate rate of speed. The rippling of the water at the bows, the banks that seem to pass quickly by, all the effort and straining of the wind help to give the notion of speed. Else the scenery is Dutchlike and flat, with quiet watercourses winding here and there; and presently, after we have passed Shiplake Lock, comes to join the main stream,

The Loddon slow with silver alders crowned;

a river with a charming Celtic name, that excites expectations which are scarcely realised.

And then we come in sight of Wargrave, snugly nestled under the hills, with its little cluster of pleasant riverside dwellings, and then the "hard" in front of The George and Dragon, with a clump of boats moored there, among which we are quite satisfied to glide to a resting-place. There is something homelike and pleasant about Wargrave, with its snug village-street, that might be something more than a village-street with a little more ambition, and the church with its ivy-mantled tower standing in solemn dignity in its own grove of trees, with the green and ample God's-acre all round. Here, we are told, lies Day, the eccentric theorist, better known than loved by successive generations of children as the author of Sandford and Merton—a sort of pinchbeck Rousseau, without the great Frenchman's genius, his strong human sentiment, or his failings. And here he fell a victim to his own, or, perhaps, rather his master's theory of education, having been kicked off and killed by an unbroken colt that he had persisted in riding. One might feel a tenderness for the memory of a high-minded, well-meaning man had one never read or been crammed with his book, so justly nauseous to the healthy appetite of the average schoolboy.

But the great feature of Wargrave to us is its hotel with its hospitable fare that recalls the palmy days of the old English inn. Heavens! what supplies for a quiet family-dinner! what noble salmon! what barons of beef! what pigeon-pies! what custards! what tarts! It would require a Rabelaisian diction to do justice to all this plenty. And the great pike grins at us ferociously from his glass-case, and the monster trout, with his brown, scaly sides; and a sly fox peers from a wall case, and the dog-otter of the district is stealthily gnawing its prey. Then there are the rare birds that have been shot—the black swans, and such like; while to crown all, as you hear the talk and laughter from all sides, as you encounter stalwart men, stalking in in all kinds of strange costumes of wading or fishing pattern, you come to recognise that the heroes are still with us, who have won these trophies from wild nature; the man who hooked the big jack—the man who landed the fat trout, who was in at the death of the sly fox, and who tracked the wily otter to its lair.

And among these jolly, hearty convives I had a kind of instinctive feeling that I should come across Charwood. This was a favourite haunt of his, and more than once during dinner I thought I recognised his contribution to the general chorus of talk. But perhaps I was wrong. Anyhow, I could see nothing of him when I explored the place after dinner. One or another knew him well, had heard of him as stopping here or there; but nothing recent or definite in the way of information came of my enquiries.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

CHAPTER VI.

THE account, brought to her at Bar-mouth by her nephew in person, of the interview which had taken place at The Cedars, came upon Miss Duncombe like a thunderbolt. That Colonel Hamilton should have made a confidante of his daughter was wonderful enough; but that he should have extended that confidence to Steenie was far more surprising.

"He knew he was safe," she said to herself scornfully. "There is no proof." But still she knew in her heart, though she would not confess it, she was staggered in her obstinate belief in his guilt. Not greatly—not so much but that she found argument after argument in his disfavour—but still so far shaken that she found

herself obliged to maintain a perpetual conflict with the doubt she could not, do what she would, completely banish. She had so taught herself to believe in the horror she had imagined—had so strengthened herself in it all these years, that nothing short of positive proof to the contrary would ever convince her; but the dead certainty was gone. She could not but see that it would have required something more than audacity—more than foolhardiness—to enable the man; who had been guilty of murder, to tell first his own child, and then the child of his victim, that he had been suspected of it. But then, she argued, to him the crime he had committed had probably never worn the aspect of murder; she had never, in her first agony even, believed the catastrophe to have been other than accidental—and how could he feel sure she had not taken Steenie into her confidence!

This was the ground she went upon with the latter, and he had not the comfort of being able to penetrate her thoughts.

Mr. Burroughes had expressed a wish to remain on at Fair Oak throughout the summer, and to this she consented.

The discovery he was so sure he had made, did not at first meet with any credence on her part, but the hitherto inexplicable mystery which had enveloped her brother-in-law's affairs, no less than his death, gave scope to such possibilities, she confessed herself, upon this point, open to conviction. The little man was half disposed to pay Steenie back in his own coin; but seeing he was in earnest, he relented and threw himself, with all his heart and mind, into the cause. He did not pooh-pooh the suggested application to Scotland Yard; but there were, in his opinion, certain steps which might be taken before it was resorted to, and one of these he lost no time in propounding.

"We must offer a reward," he said, "to any person or persons whatsoever, who can prove having had any transaction or communication with, or knowledge of, Mr. Samuel Elliott. That will be the first move."

"I leave it to you," said Steenie. "All I hope is we shall not come by knowledge we would rather be without, in a vain search for what we really want."

"I would not say that if I were you," observed the other. "I knew your father, remember, and I am not afraid of anything turning up to his disadvantage."

"I don't like the notion of his having

gone under a false name," the young man replied doggedly.

The advertisement was put in nevertheless, and repeated more than once, without obtaining any result.

In the meantime, Steenie was greatly surprised, upon going to dine, as he was in the habit of doing, when none of his acquaintances had been good enough to invite him, at The White Horse one evening, to find Colonel Hamilton established there.

"Mary has gone upon a little visit," he said; "and I did not know what to do with myself. I have nothing to do with the season, nor the season with me, and I don't want to be looked up until I have made my plans, and have a roof of my own over my head; so I thought I would run down here and have a breath of the fresh country air, at any rate."

Steenie felt, and probably looked, a little surprised. True, an odd person, now and again, did come to West Saxford upon no special business whatever, attracted by the river and such small fishing as it afforded, or by the beauty of the surrounding country; but surely there must be a hundred other places in England which would furnish far greater inducements to a man like Colonel Hamilton. He could not understand it; least of all, was he disposed to flatter himself that Mary's father came after him. The Colonel saw his wonderment, and smiled with a quiet, undisguised appreciation of it, which was tantalising enough, but he volunteered no further explanation.

"Perhaps," Ellerton thought, the blood mounting to his face at the mere mental suggestion, "he wants to hear something about me. Well, I have lived amongst the people all my life, and I don't suppose I am without my enemies—nobody is—but I think they'll let me down easy on the whole."

But it was not with this object, though any curiosity he had upon that score was gratified before long, without any trouble upon his part, the Colonel had come. He had had for some time past—in fact, ever since his flying visit to West Saxford two years before—an idea in his head, too shadowy and too devoid of any reasonable foundation to be called a suspicion, which he was eager either to dispel altogether or to justify. If anywhere he could obtain the means of doing one of these two things by it, it would be on the spot where it had sprung into birth. There were facts to be

arrived at, both in the past and present, a knowledge of which could be attained to nowhere else, and it was in search of these that he had taken up his abode at The White Horse.

Two-and-twenty years make a great change in any population, but they do not entirely reconstruct it, in most cases it takes the century to do that—that is to say, if you admit all ages and classes into your calculation. A good many will have died, a good many gone away; but amongst the new comers and the young people who have grown up and are to him who returns as new and strange as those others, there will be some who remember him, and, for the sake of the old days and old associations, are glad to welcome him. Colonel Hamilton found a few such at West Saxford. They invited him, and made the place pleasant to him, and amongst them he heard a great deal he was anxious to know.

People, having no notion of any special interest he took in Stephen Ellerton on the young fellow's own account, and rightly judging that his intimacy with Miss Dunscombe had ceased with his connection with the place at large, spoke freely enough of both, and, as a natural sequence, of Steenie's benefactor. The town clerk did not appear to be a popular man; he was not liberal, and he was reserved; the most amiable point in his character, after his love of his wife and daughter, being his friendship for the little household at Fair Oak. Yes, he had made money, but he had had a hard battle to fight for years; at one time he had scarcely known where to turn; but in the nick of time a distant relation had died and left him a thousand pounds or so, and forthwith the luck turned. There was no doubt he was a good man of business, and had worked "like a nigger" until his health failed. Asked what was the matter with him, the good folks shrugged their shoulders and shook their heads, with a significant little tap of the forehead. Margetts was very shy of the subject, they said, but young Stansfeld was getting sick of the life he was led, and uneasy about his wife, and he talked.

"I fancy the legacy cannot have fallen in when I knew Mr. Bevan," the Colonel remarked casually to somebody who told him the story. "I scarcely heard of him, and out of his office I never met with him."

"I don't suppose it had," was the answer.

"I remember it was said that the good luck came just in time for the baby, and Nellie Stansfeld must be between two and three and twenty. Why, I declare you are shivering, with the thermometer up at ninety degrees! That is what your confounded hot climates bring a man to. Have some brandy-and-water!"

Steenie did not see much of the Colonel these days, though, one evening out of three possibly, they would dine together at the hotel. As far as the younger man could make out, the one person in the place to whom the elder had taken a fancy, and for whose society he showed a predilection, was Robert Stansfeld, with whom he went walking and fishing, played billiards, and took now and then a hand at whist. Ellerton was ashamed of himself for feeling a little jealous when he heard of this familiarity; it seemed hard that the other's very idleness should give him the opportunity of ingratiating himself with Mary Hamilton's father. The consolation was, he was a married man.

So far, Steenie had met with no encouragement to prosecute his search. Time was going on—it was now three weeks since the advertisement in re Samuel Elliott had been inserted, and there had been no reply to it; and Mr. Burroughes, though he did not fail to remind Ellerton that they could not expect to do more in twenty days than had been done in as many years, felt more and more disposed to have recourse to professional assistance.

"Some of those fellows have a regular genius," he said, apropos of detectives. "But it don't pay them to hurry themselves. We should have to strike a bargain."

The Colonel, to Steenie's surprise and disappointment, declined to enter into the subject at all with Miss Dunscombe's tenant, and had very little to say upon it to the young man himself.

"If you could arrive at anything," he said, "I should be glad, for Mary's sake, and for your own; but I never led you to suppose for one moment that I was sanguine of success, or that I could help you to it. If you hear anything that bears upon it, I hope you will let me know, that is all."

One day, towards the end of the second week he had spent at The White Horse, the landlord told Ellerton the Colonel was talking of going; he was not very well, and fancied the place did not suit him, and Mr. Margetts, who, Steenie then

heard for the first time had been attending him, had paid a longer visit than usual that morning.

Steenie felt annoyed. Everybody, everywhere, he thought, seemed to have conspired to keep him out of their confidence. Only the day before he had been to the Holme, and had been put off as usual, having seen nobody but Nellie, from whom he had gathered little, save that the house-keeper had at last been obliged to give in to the idea of having a nurse. His non-admittance to the sick-room began to be awkward as well as exasperating to him, and altogether he felt uneasy and dissatisfied.

What was the good of it all? he began to say to himself; in point of fact, was not the Colonel's opposition just as decided and just as conclusive as his aunt's? What was the use of a conditional consent, when the conditions were such as could not possibly be fulfilled? He was fainter hearted than he should have been, because he had more upon his mind in other impersonal ways than was good for him; and the more he thought of Mary the wider the gulf seemed to grow that yawned between them.

CHAPTER VII.

"At last, my dear Ellerton! We have a nibble at last!" exclaimed Mr. Burroughes with great animation, pouncing upon Steenie mid-way between the office and the hostelry, some ten days after Colonel Hamilton's departure. "Somebody has turned up at last who knows something of your father—that is to say, of Mr. Elliott. The letter was forwarded from Weyland's this morning, and here it is."

"The fellow takes care not to commit himself, whoever he may be," Steenie observed when he had read it. "Still, he gives his name, and the name of the firm by whom he is employed, so one must conclude he writes in good faith. The question is, Who is to go over there to hear what he has to say? I am tied by the leg, as you know."

"But I am not," the other retorted with alacrity, "and I am your man. I have not gone in much for foreign travel, but I can find my way about abroad, all the same, and I don't suppose it will be harder to get on at Amsterdam than elsewhere. Besides, the man, when I arrive at him, is an Englishman, and will understand me and I him."

"It is very good of you," said Steenie;

and so it was settled. Within the week the energetic little man was back again—triumphant, but with a shadow and seriousness mellowing his triumph, which struck Steenie at first sight.

"You must be prepared," he said, "to be surprised, and, perhaps, even a little shocked, though, possibly, after all, the contingency, up to a certain point, is one we ought to have been prepared for. It was here in West Saxford—in Mr. Bevan's office—that this man Spender became acquainted with the name of Samuel Elliott. He was a clerk in the office, at the time of your father's death, and for some time after, and he is prepared to swear that a person of that name was amongst the clients, though he never to his knowledge saw him, or knew anything about him. Now, nothing could be more natural than that Mr. Bevan, as your father's solicitor, should be in your father's confidence."

"Nothing," Steenie assented.

"The unnatural part of it," pursued the other, "is the keeping silence afterwards, under the extraordinary circumstances. One would have thought that any one possessing the clue to any mystery in the life of a man foully murdered by some unknown assassin, would have felt himself bound to place that clue at the disposal of justice. How Mr. Bevan can have kept his own counsel on the subject, I cannot conceive—that is, supposing the identity established. But it is only fair to tell you, before we enter into that part of the matter at all, that there is a fresh complication. According to our friend Spender—and the man seems straightforward enough—he distinctly understood Mr. Bevan, upon one occasion, that the client of the name of Elliott and the distant relation or connection, who left him the legacy which set him on his feet, were one and the same man. Now, if this were the case, it would stand to reason that I had been misled by an accidental resemblance, and that, after all, my old client and your unfortunate father were separate persons."

"I was afraid that would be the end of it," Steenie said after a pause. "And but for one thing I should be glad and not sorry that it is. All along I felt doubtful, but you were so sure," he added, a little reproachfully, "there was no convincing you."

The other looked hard at him, and there was a world of meaning in the look. Then he said quietly:

"In a case like this, it does not do to jump at conclusions, and it is better that

each man should arrive at his own. Now I have had time to think it all well out between this and Amsterdam, and I would have you set your mind to it in the same way. All I have to say to you in the meantime is, that I am no more convinced of my mistake now than I was before I went over, and I don't believe I ever shall be until I have been face to face with your senior partner himself."

"But you said just now yourself——"

"Never mind what I said. Set your own brains to work, compare facts, and dates, and 'coincidences,' as you call them, and see what they bring you to. It will be time enough to discuss matters when you have done that. By-the-bye, did I tell you Miss Duncombe has written to my wife that she will be glad of a bed, to-morrow night?"

Steenie said "No;" he knew his aunt was coming up for the day on business, but he had heard nothing of her intention of staying the night. For himself, the first thing he had to do was to write to Colonel Hamilton what had occurred. The post would not wait for him to think the things out, he said to himself, and he felt that Mary and her father had a right to be kept informed of things.

It was late in the evening of the following day. In the dining-room at Fair Oak, with the portrait of Stephen Ellerton looking down on them from the wall, were assembled three persons—Miss Duncombe, Mr. Burroughes, and Steenie. In the face of the stockbroker there was a certain triumph; the other two looked pale and perturbed, the one positively haggard.

"It fits in like the pieces of a puzzle," she was saying in a low, scared voice. "But how is it to be proved? How are we to get at him? And if, after all, we should have made a mistake——"

"My dear madam," the little man at the foot of the table interrupted her to say, "allow me to recapitulate the evidence, if I may call it so, once more. On the morning of the 20th of November, 1860, the original of that portrait left West Saxford by the half-past ten o'clock train for town on business—what business never transpired. A gentleman who travelled up with him parted from him at Euston. Another gentleman of his acquaintance deposed to passing him about one o'clock in the afternoon, within a stone's-throw of Coutts's Bank. Between the time of his arrival in London, therefore, at a quarter

past eleven, and that of his appearance in the Strand at one o'clock, nobody seems to have set eyes upon him; but at twelve o'clock that very day there comes to my place of business by appointment his double, and between the hours of twelve and one—close upon one, as I was afterwards informed—an open cheque given in payment to that double was cashed at Coutts's. You follow me?"

Miss Dunscombe gave a faint gesture of assent.

"At half-past four in the afternoon, the original of that picture was observed to get out of the train, and to give up his ticket at the station here; but it was not until half-past five that he looked in at the club, the walk from the station to the club taking, as you are aware, not more than from five to ten minutes. Where he was and what he was doing in the interim is a question which has remained to this day unanswered. All that is known is that he showed himself in his old haunts to his old friends for a few minutes, looking very bright and well, and that he was never seen by anybody—to bear witness to the fact—again in life. So far, and no farther, can we trace him. Of his double there is no further trace whatever from the moment he leaves the bank. He has an appointment which means money, but he never keeps it; he has an address at which occasionally he calls for letters, but he calls there no more; he is advertised for, but he never answers. He disappears simply and entirely, as though he, too, were dead. Now, at last, after all these years, we hear of him—a client, at the same time, of the same firm, as the man whose living image he would appear to have been, but a client whose person was unknown to the clerks—a client with regard to whom one of them, at any rate, became possessed of the idea that he was a relation, and the source of an accession of fortune which saved his solicitor from bankruptcy. Those are the facts, Miss Dunscombe. I have my own opinion and my own theory, and I am not afraid to confess it. I believe your brother-in-law and the man I have spoken of as his double to be one and the same man, and I believe that the thousand pounds which were handed over Coutts's counter to him, the day of his death, found their way, somehow or other, into Bevan's hands, and were his salvation."

"You shall not say it!" cried Miss Dunscombe. "I cannot allow it to be said. Steenie, what are you about that

you stand by and let your best friend be vilified?"

"We cannot help our convictions, Aunt Margaret," the young man replied quietly. "You, of all people, must allow that. As for me, I wish to judge no one unheard. But, ill or well, some one must see Mr. Bevan."

He excused himself to his host, and promising Miss Dunscombe to return shortly, made his way, expecting he knew not what, bewildered and unhappy, to The White Horse. The landlord met him at the door with the intelligence that Colonel Hamilton was in the house, and was desirous of seeing him. He found him stirred somewhat out of his usual dignified calm, and eager to receive fuller details than it had been possible for Steenie to communicate by letter.

"Well," he observed at last with a deep sigh, "the net seems to me to be drawing in so closely round the miserable wretch, I could almost find it in my heart to pity him. His sin has been so long finding him out, and Heaven only knows what his life must have been in the meantime."

The confidence with which he spoke so startled Steenie that he looked up at him aghast. The Colonel smiled.

"I know more than you suppose," he said. "Mary and I have not been idle. You must remember that my girl had not merely her own happiness at stake, but—though it was in one quarter only—her father's name. Whilst you have been wondering and despairing, she has been at work. She laid her little plan, and I have helped her to carry it out. One of these days—before long, now—you will know all about it."

There was no inducing him to say any more, but the conversation kept flowing continually back into the same channel, showing how exclusively the minds of both were possessed by it. They were smoking their cigars in the inn garden when Robert Stansfeld came out to them there, in a great heat.

"I came on from Fairoak," he said, "to tell you that Miss Dunscombe has gone to The Holme, and that you"—it was to Steenie he addressed himself—"had better get back and hold yourself in readiness, in case you should be sent for. Mr. Bevan is much worse—quite off his head—and the nurse says he keeps calling for your aunt and you. She is the only person who seems to understand him. Nellie is scared out of her senses, and, as for me, I have kept

at a respectful distance all along. I don't understand illness, you know, Colonel, and I've always been a trifle shy of my father-in-law. But the nurse came to me herself this evening, and a very nice young woman she is, too, I can tell you—quite the lady."

"I should think, Ellerton," the Colonel broke in abruptly, "that if there is a chance of your being wanted, the sooner you make your way home the better. Come in with me for a moment first, will you?"

Steenie complied, and Stansfeld, waiting for him outside, was surprised at the glow in his cheeks, and the light in his eyes, when he joined him. At the garden-gate at Fairoak the young men parted.

Miss Dunscombe, in the meantime, having assented to Stansfeld's proposition that she should then and there satisfy the craving the sick man appeared to have for her presence, with a readiness which had much relieved him—sat talking in hushed tones to Nellie, in Mr. Bevan's dressing-room.

"No," the young wife was saying, in answer to her enquiry; "we have not sent for Mr. Margetts. He has been here twice to-day, and he says nothing can be done, unless he becomes violent, and then," with a half sob, "there would only be the one thing. But I don't believe it will ever come to that. And oh, Miss Dunscombe! is it very wicked of me to wish that it might end any other way—any!" cried poor Nellie.

The elder woman turned her face away abruptly to hide the sudden spasm that contracted it. If the girl only knew one other way in which it might end, to which even the terrible death in life of a mad-house would be preferable!

"What does the nurse think?" she asked. "And where did you get her from? She looks young to have had much experience, but then experience seems to be the last qualification that is required nowadays for work of any sort."

"I am sure I don't know whether she has had much or not," Nellie replied carelessly. "It was Mr. Margetts who got her down from town for us, and I like her immensely. She is so gentle and clever, and nothing seems to put her out. How she stands the nights I don't know. Joliffe said it made her blood curdle to listen to all the horrors he imagined—poor dear father! But I suppose these people are trained to it."

As she finished speaking the door that led

out of the dressing-room into the passage was gently opened, and Robert Stansfeld put his head in, whilst at the same moment the figure of the nurse, tall and slight, in her soft grey dress and white apron, appeared in the opening between the two rooms.

"I think you might come in now," she said, addressing Miss Dunscombe. "He is awake and seems better. Yes, if you please," as Nellie made a movement as though to join her husband; "one at a time, Mrs. Stansfeld."

The young wife acquiesced silently, and Miss Dunscombe followed the nurse into the sick-room unaccompanied. It was a large room, dimly lighted, and the heavy crimson hangings of the bedstead rendered still more apparent the almost ashen pallor of the face that rested on the pillow. Robust-looking the lawyer had never been, but the wan, shrunken outline of his features as she now saw them, shocked and startled his visitor.

"I have brought an old friend to see you," the nurse said in her clear, low voice. "You have talked of her very often. Here she is."

She turned pale herself as she spoke, but Miss Dunscombe did not observe it, as she bent over the sick man, and touched gently, as if afraid of hurting it, the hand that lay on the coverlet.

"I am so sorry to find you so ill, Mr. Bevan," she said earnestly.

For the moment the cruel doubt and suspicion which had been aroused in her heart lay dormant, and she felt nothing but compassion for the wreck before her. He was looking at her with strange, vacant eyes.

"I—I have not the pleasure," he said.

She drew back inexpressibly shocked. His non-recognition was a thing she was not prepared for. The nurse touched her gently on the arm, and gave her the cue.

"Say something of your nephew," she whispered.

"Don't you remember me—Steenie's aunt?" Miss Dunscombe demanded of the sick man.

He looked up with a weak, absent sort of smile.

"Yes—yes," he said politely; "remember me to him, if you please."

"He is so distressed about your illness, and he is so anxious you should know he is doing his best," she persisted, dwelling on each word to emphasise it and arrest his attention. "He has wished to see you so much."

The invalid contracted his brows as if urging his memory to an effort.

"In the holidays," he said at last. "Yes, in the holidays, if he is a good boy," and then with a smile, half cunning, half vacant, he muttered something, of which only the word "tip" was audible. As he did so, he closed his eyes, and turned his head away, and Miss Dunscombe, for once in her life fairly disconcerted, fell back a few paces beside the nurse.

"Why, his memory is gone," she said. "It was of no use my coming. It will be of no use my remaining. I can do no good here."

The nurse led the way quietly and softly back into the dressing-room. Nellie Stansfeld had not returned to it, and the two women were, for the moment, alone.

"You will stay the night?" the nurse said, in a voice which, subdued as it was, had in it—or so it appeared to her companion—not less of command than enquiry. The tone was one she was so unaccustomed to, that involuntarily Miss Dunscombe resented it.

"Certainly not," she replied stiffly. "In Mr. Bevan's present state there is nothing to be gained by it, and Mrs. Stansfeld will not expect it."

"But if something were to be gained by it, Miss Dunscombe?"

The earnestness of her manner, and the refinement of her articulation, so far modified the effect of her persistency as to ensure her a civil reply.

"It is good of you to be so much interested, but I assure you there is nothing," Miss Dunscombe said with polite decision. "I am only keeping you from your patient as it is, and I will wish you good evening. I shall find Mrs. Stansfeld downstairs."

"Excuse me, Miss Dunscombe, but I cannot let you go," the nurse said firmly. "I require it of you as an act of justice—as an act of atonement, to watch with me this one night by the bedside yonder."

For a moment the older woman stood silent in her astonishment; then, fixing her eyes, with a world of scornful enquiry in them, on the pale, proud face of the other: "You require it of me?" she repeated slowly and with intense haughtiness. "And, pray, who are you?"

"I am Mary Hamilton," was the answer. "The daughter of the man you have wronged by your suspicions for more than twenty years past, and the promised wife of your nephew."

The low, clear voice in which the words were uttered—for not all her excitement made the girl forgetful of the proximity of

the sick-room—added to their impressiveness, and Miss Dunscombe staggered for a moment as though a blow had been dealt her.

It was but for the moment, however, for as Mary made a movement forward as if to assist her, she waved her hastily off, and supporting herself with one hand on the table next her, confronted her with an ashen face, and an expression half fearful, half defiant.

"And what brought you here," she demanded harshly, "masquerading in a character that is not your own?"

The contemptuous tone, the contemptuous words, brought to the girl's cheeks the colour, to her eyes the fire, of which the painful experiences of the last few days had robbed them.

"I came here, masquerading, as you are pleased to call it," she replied with a haughtiness equal to Miss Dunscombe's own, "to perform a duty which had been left undone by you and yours since before I was born. I came here, Miss Dunscombe, on the track of the murderer." Her voice sank and she shivered as the last word passed her lips, and she went on quickly, as though to cover it: "My father's suspicions were roused by things he heard down here in connection with Mr. Bevan's illness and the state of his mind, and he conceived a great wish—for my sake and Steenie's far more than for his own—to set his doubts at rest. There was one only way in which it could be done, and that was by obtaining admission there." She pointed as she spoke to the sick-room. "And in one only character was that to be obtained. I had attended classes, and seen something of nursing, and when it became necessary for Mrs. Joliffe to go away for change, the doctor was only too glad to avail himself of my father's recommendation of me. There is no blame attaching to him in the matter. He had no reason to suspect any motive in the recommendation but such as was straightforward and even benevolent."

"Nobody blamed him," Miss Dunscombe said shortly. "He was simply the last man in the world to see anything he was not intended to see."

"That is how it happened," Mary said in conclusion. "I came a fortnight ago, and before I had been here a week I knew—putting together the fragments which escaped him in his ravings—all the miserable story of that night's work. Much of it he has told me himself in his

sleep. His mind seems clearer than when he is awake, and he will talk to you and answer you as though he were. I have sat there and listened night after night, until I thought at times I could not bear the horror of it any longer. Surely you cannot refuse us the poor justice of doing it this once?"

"Tell me what he says—what motive he ascribes to himself," Miss Duncombe asked hoarsely, evading the question.

"He must have wanted money," was the reply, "and it sounds as though he had been tempted by the sight of it. Why did he bring it to him? Why did he show it to him? That is the refrain of it all. And then he raves about his wife and the baby, and their all being turned out into the street; and sometimes," lowering her voice, "he seems to be going through it all—catching him up, struggling with him, and then he will start up with a scream, and tell you he is not dead—that he is only stunned, and that it is too dark to see him. It is more dreadful than you can imagine to hear him."

"But it is not always that; there must be other things in his mind—other things he wanders about; and you sent word he talked of me, and of Steenie."

"There has scarcely been a night," Mary Hamilton replied, "that he has not fancied you were here watching him. It is to you, if anybody, he has been endeavouring, in his delirium, to explain and defend himself. Sometimes he is calmer, thinking you understand him; sometimes he gets beside himself with pain and fear, pleading with you—for it must be for you he takes me—all that he has done and means to do for Steenie. And oh, Miss Duncombe, though I don't know, and can only guess, what tempted him, and how it all happened, and though I cannot doubt it was he who did the deed, and though, too, for my father's sake, I cannot hold my peace, and let you go on doubting it—still, in spite of all of it, I do not believe—I shall never believe—he meant murder. Robbery—oh yes, but not murder!"

As she stood with clasped hands, her eyes flashing through the tears which her own earnestness had called into them, the soft colour in her cheeks deepened into carmine, all the unselfish pity her words bespoke alive in her face, a sudden flood of tenderness—such tenderness as had been

buried for years in her sister's grave—swept, so to say, over Margaret Duncombe, and broke down in a moment the long-standing barriers of distrust and reserve.

"God bless you!" she exclaimed brokenly, as she held her arms out to the girl standing before her, and took her into them. "You are a noble girl, and for Steenie's sake you must forgive me. God knows I have suffered more than you all."

There is very little more to be said. Of the details of the crime, which had so nearly blighted so many lives, nothing was ever known save from the delirious ravings of the man who had committed it. It was not permitted to Richard Bevan to confess or to receive absolution at the hands of mortal. No glimmer of reason returned to him before he died, and his secret, so far as the world at large was concerned, went down to the grave with him; Nellie Stansfeld, spared for her own innocent sake all knowledge of it, carrying away with her to her new home, amongst her husband's people, the light heart of her youth.

For the mystery of the glove, which was destined to be the cause of so much misunderstanding, and to one person, at least, so much misery, the conjecture hazarded by Mary Hamilton, when she first heard the story, affords the only likely explanation. In all human probability, dropped by Colonel Hamilton in the lawyer's office, during his friend's interview with the latter, earlier in the day, it was accidentally picked up and appropriated by Mr. Ellerton himself, when he paid that visit to it, which doubtless occupied the half-hour, never to be accounted for, between his departure from the railway-station and his arrival at the club, on the last day of his life.

It was many a long day before the Colonel forgave himself for the ordeal through which he had suffered his daughter to pass, and not until he saw her her old self again could he bring himself to accept with any cordiality the olive-branch extended to him—Heaven only knows what heartfelt contrition!—by his old love.

The shadow which had so long been permitted to darken the lives of those two, was the last cloud on the horizon of the young lives which were so dear to both of them, and it was lifted for ever on the day which gave Mary Hamilton to her husband's arms.

JUN 12 1939

